

Accepted by the Graduate Faculty, Indiana University South Bend, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Master of Liberal Studies.

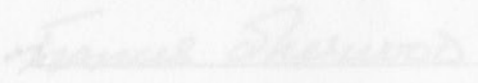
KAOS


Patrick J. Furlong, Ph.D.

Delores M. Patterson


Joseph Chaney, Ph.D.

Thesis Committee

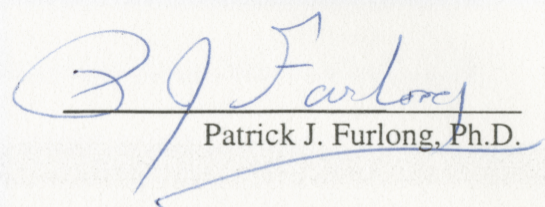

Frances Sherwood, M.A.

Date of Oral Examination
December 17, 2001

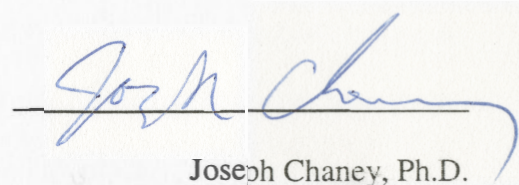
Submitted to the faculty of the University Graduate School
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree
Master of Liberal Studies
in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences,
Indiana University South Bend

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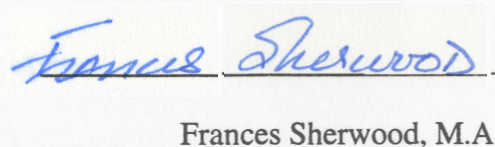


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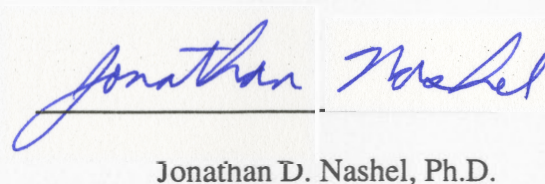
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Jonathan D. Nashel, Ph.D.

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INTRODUCTION

My idea for “Kaos” was inspired by a simple water gun game I played during my undergraduate studies at Northwestern University. It developed into a complex cinematic vision of students who must learn to let go of the past and accept people for who they are while a murder mystery unfolds. I spent a considerable amount of time rearranging the screenplay structure, creating characters, rewriting dialogue, and developing plot twists as well as subplots that advance the main story line.

Even though many great writers have strayed from the formula, the textbook screenplay is approximately 120 pages. A film is structured into three acts and each page represents about one minute on the movie screen. Act I, roughly 30 pages, allows me to set up my story, introduce the characters and the dramatic premise and establish the relationships between my main character, Xavier, and the other people in his world. The end of the act represents a turning point in the script that spins the action in a different direction. I start with a tale about a group of students playing a water gun game to blow off steam before finals, and it turns into a murder mystery. Xavier’s best friend, Markus, dies during the game when someone switches a water gun with a real weapon.

Act II, the next 60 pages, is where the true action of the screenplay takes place, allowing plots to unfold and confrontation to erupt from every possible angle. This element of conflict is crucial to any script. Without conflict my characters have nothing to do. During the second act Xavier learns that the gang that murdered his brother might have killed Markus; and he is overwhelmed by both work and family problems while his baseball teammates continue to be murder targets. The end of the second act represents

yet another turning point and is supposed to give a sense that all is lost for the main character. To that end, Xavier is arrested for the campus murders.

The third act, and final 30 or so pages of a script, brings the entire piece to some type of resolution at a quick pace. Justin is revealed as the campus shooter just before killing himself. Before I wrote one word for “Kaos” I knew that I wanted to involve a rape story. But knowing that it has been overdone I decided the attack would be on a male character – Justin, which later allows me to establish him as my villain as he seeks revenge. In the end, the baseball team’s unwillingness to accept him for who he is and Justin’s father always coming down on him causes Justin to take his life. These and other choices helped me further my theme of tolerance as even Xavier finally accepts his family circumstances after seeing how a lack of tolerance can end and affect those in your life.

While studying other writers’ works and movies during the course of writing “Kaos” I quickly learned that the first 10-15 pages of a script are extremely important. As a result, I devoted most of my time to developing the opening scenes, which must be engaging enough to hook the reader. I experimented with several popular opening techniques, including a “flavor scene” depicting a step show to stir up the college atmosphere, and suspense, but settled with the “fake out” approach. “Kaos” opens with a bit of foreshadowing, and the reader is led in one direction only to discover that they have come to the wrong conclusion, which helps establish the broad theme of the movie – that what you see and think you know isn’t necessarily the case.

One of the biggest challenges in writing this script involved character development. I had to truly think of the people in “Kaos” as human beings with multiple dimensions. So

I focused on giving the main characters the three basic components of a character's life: professional, social and private elements. To do this I created a profile for each major character, including what they do for a living, what their goals and aspirations are, what they might do in certain situations, who their friends and family are, and what they do in their private time. The profile also included creating a character's back-story to explain their present day actions. All seemed like very easy tasks at first until I discovered that portions of the characteristics I developed needed to tie into the storyline and advance the script from beginning to end, which means the characters also have to evolve in some way. There were quite a few times I found myself stuck. But whenever I had doubts about a character, especially Xavier, I took the advice that most screenwriters give. I dug into my own life and wrote what I know, thereby giving life to a couple of plots, including Xavier's complicated relationship with his parents.

As I continued to develop characters I was in essence also creating subplots. Subplots, which give a screenplay extra dimensions, are introduced in Act I and played out in the second act, pushing the main storyline forward. No story can function properly without multiple plots. Every script has an ABC storyline. "A" represents the physical action; "B" is the romantic portion of the story or element that shows the character's emotional side; and "C" gives us the subplots. The main story in "Kaos" is a water gun game that turns deadly. Xavier's family problems, work woes, love for baseball, a budding love interest, friends, and his need to be accepted interweave this plot.

Once I ironed out several plots I moved on to tackle dialogue, the function of a character. It's a skill that I am still developing. The greatest lesson I learned through revisions is that dialogue must communicate information or the facts of the story to my

intended audience. There were some times while writing “Kaos” that I noticed my dialogue didn’t advance my story or reveal who the characters are, and therefore needed to change or be ripped from the script entirely. While working on dialogue I also found myself reading the conversations out loud. This was helpful in allowing me to make sure the words had rhythm, seemed realistic, and that character’s voices were distinguishable from each other. The latter sometimes resulted in my giving a character like Kyle a favorite word like “dude” to insert in many of his conversations. Therefore if a person watching my movie turned away from the screen for a moment and heard the word, they would immediately be able to connect it to Kyle’s character.

As a writer by profession I did however have to be careful when writing my dialogue, being mindful not to treat my script like a news story or novel. A screenplay is visual. It’s a story told largely with pictures and descriptions. The key is to show and not tell. This is done with description and often through a character’s silence. By the time “Kaos” fades to black I believe I have shown that I can tell a compelling story and have a firm grasp on the fundamentals of script writing while keeping in mind that true writing comes in rewriting.

KAOS TREATMENT

The sun is beginning to set in the north suburbs of the windy city on the campus of Northwestern University. Markus Wilson, an African-American student jumps over a bush out of breath. Baseball players Richard Hampton and Nathan Cross are chasing him. The Caucasian students follow Markus into a building where he tries to hide. Richard pulls out a gun and aims at Markus while other screaming students run to take cover. He pulls the trigger as Markus runs into his best friend Xavier Johnson and collapses. Nathan and Richard take off. Xavier's an 18-year-old African-American student who was raised in Chicago and is attending the school on a baseball scholarship. An elderly professor exits a room to investigate the commotion as Xavier kneels beside Markus in disbelief. Markus slowly sits up and looks at the back of his shirt. It's wet. The professor scolds him for playing inside while classes are in session.

Xavier is equally upset with Markus, reminding his friend of his distaste for guns. As they enter English class Markus points out that they are just playing with paintball handguns that shoot water pellets. The teacher is discussing D.H. Lawrence and his frank treatment of sexuality in literature. Nathan and Richard are already seated along with fellow Panther baseball teammates Justin McCann IV, Douglas Ramsey, Chris Moore and Kenny Sheldon. Douglas makes a homophobic remark about D.H. Lawrence. Classmate Gary calls him ignorant and the team shoots back insulting

remarks before the teacher jumps in and reminds them that Lawrence's sexuality was rather ambiguous. The class ends.

Justin is among the first to leave but is stopped in the hallway by his father, an economics professor at the university. He tells Justin he knows he is failing English. If he doesn't pass, Justin will have to quit the team. His father also reminds him that he is not happy that someone from their prominent family wants to play sports the rest of their life. Justin begins to argue with his father about accepting him for who he is when Justin's girlfriend Cassandra Blakely interrupts. She reminds Mr. McCann about her family's benefit later in the week before leaving with Justin.

Outside they pass by Markus and Xavier, who is still not happy with his friend's behavior. We get the sense that Xavier has had a bad experience with guns growing up in Chicago. Trying to avoid further conversation with Markus on the subject, Xavier apologizes to Gary for the team's constant harassment. Gary, who has never been able to make the baseball team, points out that he is used to it. Before departing Gary promises that one day he'll have the last laugh. Xavier and Markus settle their differences and discuss Richard's frat party before parting ways.

A gang member is secretly watching Xavier as he heads to work to lock up. While at the party, Xavier speaks briefly to fellow classmate Hope before hooking up with his roommate Kyle Walker who is drunk. As the two prepare to go back to their dorm, Kyle enters a room to grab his jacket but quickly bursts back out and bolts for the stairs. A baffled Xavier turns to go after Kyle when Justin stumbles out of the same room wearing boxers chasing a frazzled Cassandra who is clutching her torn shirt. More baseball players emerge from the room, as well, in a drunken state.

Xavier attempts to gather information from his roommate about what happened, but Kyle changes the subject when passing a sign about the campus water gun game, Kaos, in which students become assassins. Kyle tries to talk Xavier into playing the game when they hear a phone ringing. During the phone conversation Xavier is very short with his mother who plans to drop off his baseball glove. The next afternoon Xavier encounters problems at work when a register comes up short at the campus bookstore. Later he accompanies his friends to sign up for Kaos. While in line, his buddy Nathan is bumped by a mysterious guy who mutters a threat. Nathan shrugs it off the best he can and the group heads to dinner. Hope and Jules, a girl Kyle is dating, stop by to talk to the guys. Their attention gets diverted when Justin and Cassandra get into a heated conversation across the room. She wants nothing more to do with him. Justin's buddy Richard comes to his rescue and tries to calm him down. During their conversation we learn that Richard used to have a crush on Cassandra. Later Xavier confronts Cassandra about the night of Richard's frat party. He tries to get her to go to the police. She refuses telling Xavier to mind his own business.

The game Kaos commences. Nathan takes a break to lift weights and is overcome by the mysterious guy from the previous day and two others wearing gang colors. They are scared away when someone else enters the room, but moments later Nathan is shot in the chest while reaching for his water gun. Gary slips out of the gym unnoticed while the police investigate. Nathan's death causes Xavier to reflect on his own brother's shooting a year ago and he seeks comfort from Hope. She spends the night only to have Xavier's mother and father/godfather Jonathan pay a visit the next morning. During the confrontation Xavier blasts his mother for lying about his

paternity before storming off. The man he grew up knowing as his godfather is actually his father. At work Xavier is accused of stealing from the bookstore. He is livid when he shows up for baseball practice. During practice Detective Sims informs the team that a Chicago gang called the Raiders, the same group that killed Xavier's brother, killed Nathan.

Following practice Xavier accompanies Markus and Kyle to pursue their assassin targets and talk about rumors that Justin is gay. The day culminates in a shoot out involving Gary, Kenny, Justin, Richard and a lurking gang member, among others. When the dust settles, Markus is dead. The police haul everyone in for questioning and Justin is fingered after police watch videotaped footage. Another videotape showing someone else fleeing the scene, coupled with finger print evidence and gunpowder residue tests help exonerate Justin. His father stops by the station, making matters worse as he reminds Justin that he put the family name in jeopardy. A distraught Xavier spends the night at home with his mother. He runs into an old friend, Chauncey, who asks Xavier if he witnessed all the details of Markus' death as he did his brother Myles'. Xavier asks Chauncey if he's heard anything about the Raiders possibly being involved in the campus shooting. Chauncey promises to keep his ear to the ground. The Xavier sees his father Alex. Once inside the family home the two dads square off about the mother's affair with Jonathan while married to Alex. Xavier leaves with Alex, who apologizes for blowing up at Jonathan. Alex admits his part in their family problems and tries to get Xavier to see that both fathers love him.

Leaving the cemetery, Xavier discovers a medallion in his jacket pocket

Back on campus Richard is seen taking a gun from his baseball locker. Xavier misses practice. After Kyle and girlfriend Jules inform Xavier that Kaos has been called off. Xavier's boss informs him that his register came up short again. He wants to fire Xavier but can't because it will affect his scholarship status and therefore his athletic standing. To no avail he tries to explain that he didn't cash out his drawer the first time things came up short, his co-worker did. Xavier blows off some steam by hitting a few balls around. Hope arrives to check on him. Meanwhile, at the Sheraton Hotel in downtown Chicago, Cassandra's family benefit is underway. Richard is seen chumming up to Cassandra's father while she expresses her relationship problems with a young lady. The young lady tells Cassandra to tell her parents what has happened with Justin. Cassandra doesn't think they will believe her. The two believe they are alone but Justin is listening nearby. Justin leaves when he's heard enough. Back on campus, Xavier shares a kiss with Hope after walking her home. On his way back to the dorm students in pursuit of someone running for their life pass Xavier. He learns Chris has just been killed. Richard, Justin and Gary are all present. Gary seems a bit rattled. Xavier vows to get to the bottom of things when evidence fingers the Raiders gang again and Xavier notices the only people dropping like flies are baseball players.

At Markus' funeral, Xavier runs into Chauncey and asks him to check into a few things for him. Detective Sims recognizes Chauncey from a description given of the possible shooter when Markus was killed. Chauncey is later seen making a mysterious phone call from his car where a Raiders gang symbol is prominently displayed. Leaving the cemetery, Xavier discovers a medallion in his jacket pocket

but doesn't know how it got there. In the meantime, both Richard and Cassandra are rather close and exhibiting strange behavior. At practice Justin gets in Richard's face about spending too much time with his girlfriend. At dinner Xavier opens a letter telling him to stay out of things that don't concern him. Before Xavier can contact Detective Sims he is arrested for the last two shootings. The police collected evidence from his baseball locker linking him to the crimes and the Raiders medallion in his pocket doesn't help the situation. Chauncey arrives seconds after the arrest. He makes a call that he is too late but it might be easier to get to Xavier in jail. The next day, students are preparing to take their D.H. Lawrence final. Justin and other members of the baseball team get into a squabble after he catches Richard and Cassandra in a private moment. Unable to control his anger, Justin is thrown out of class. Failing the test means Justin can no longer play baseball.

At the police station Xavier's family and lawyer try to sort things out when the police scanner alerts them to another shooting on campus in progress. While at the station Jonathan expresses his willingness to do whatever it takes to post his son's bail. The gesture touches Xavier. At the scene of the shooting Hope overhears Cassandra saying the victim – Douglas, "a rapist bastard," got what he deserved. Hope relays the information to Kyle who finally spills that Cassandra got raped the night of Richard's frat party. At that moment Justin is combing through Richard's room looking for clues that Richard is fooling around with Cassandra, when he stumbles upon a letter from Cassandra's father giving his blessing for the two to date. Justin also finds a box of incriminating evidence that he takes to Detective Sims.

Fresh out of jail, Xavier heads to his job and confronts a coworker about his connection to the Raiders. Before Xavier arrives at the police station to talk with Sims, Chauncey comes out of the shadows shooting at Xavier. A chase ensues and Xavier learns that the Raiders were trying to make sure he stayed silent about his brother's shooting. The police re-opened the investigation after Nathan's shooting, and the Raider's think Xavier, who had been with his brother, saw his shooter. Chauncey swears he didn't kill any of Xavier's teammates but says Richard had a gun at Markus' funeral. Xavier catches up with Kyle, Jules and Hope, and all have their own ideas of who killed whom and why. Upon confronting Richard, police are already on the scene to arrest him for conspiring with Cassandra to get back at her rapists. Richard is stunned, acknowledging that he never even knew anyone was raped. Gary is also questioned when a list of the team's roster falls out of his pocket with the names of the dead baseball players crossed off. Shortly thereafter, Xavier spots Justin lurking in the shadows and wants him to go down as well, since he took part in the rape. Justin takes off with Xavier following close behind. Justin bumps into a drunken Kenny who starts to harass him. Justin flips out, drawing a gun on Kenny for raping him, with all the other dead baseball players, when they found out he was bisexual. We discover Justin was seeing Markus and killed him accidentally while aiming for Kenny. Shortly after all is revealed Justin pulls the trigger on himself as the police close in around him.

TAKE IN:

VITA

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY - EARLY SPRING

Delores Patterson is a native of Chicago who received her undergraduate degree from the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University. Delores then went on to work as the K-12 education reporter for the *South Bend Tribune* for two and half years covering the South Bend Community School Corporation. In the spring of 2001, she accepted a job with *The Detroit News* to handle general assignment reporting for the Western Wayne Bureau.

RICHARD

Get up! We can't lose him.

Markus sprints past STUDENTS, bumping into several along the way. Richard and Nathan continue in hot pursuit. Markus darts into a building out of breath.

INT. CAMPUS BUILDING

Startled STUDENTS watch Markus search desperately for a place to hide. Richard and Nathan burst through the front doors and see Markus.

Richard pulls a gun from his pants and aims at Markus. Screaming students take cover.

NATHAN

Not here. You're crazy.

Markus tries to get out of the way. Richard pulls the trigger and a blast echoes in the hall. At the same time, Markus runs smack into XAVIER JOHNSON and plummets to the ground.

NATHAN

Shit! I'm out of here.

Nathan and Richard bolt around the corner. Students compose themselves. A classroom door opens and an ELDERLY PROFESSOR out walks.

FADE IN:

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY - EARLY SPRING

EXT. CAMPUS - NIGHT

The sun is setting. An 18-year-old African-American student, MARKUS WILSON, jumps over a bush like a hurdle barely grasping his back pack. Sweat drips from his face as he takes a quick glimpse over his shoulder.

Caucasian students RICHARD HAMPTON and NATHAN CROSS are on his heels until Nathan trips over the bush. Both are wearing Northwestern Panther baseball jerseys.

Richard grabs Nathan by his number six jersey, helping him off the ground.

RICHARD

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ELDERLY PROFESSOR

What's going on out here!

Students crowd around Markus's body. Xavier looks down at his best friend, grief-stricken.

XAVIER

INT. CLASS No. This can't be.

Markus slowly sits up and looks at the back of his shirt. It's wet.

MARKUS

Dang! They got me.

XAVIER

I can't believe you're a part of this.

The elderly professor pushes through the crowd.

ELDERLY PROFESSOR

Richard All right, show's over.
(to Markus)

As for you, you aren't supposed to be playing inside.

MARKUS

Sorry, but it wasn't my--

ELDERLY PROFESSOR

--I don't want to hear it. Let it happen again and you'll know what that word really means.

The professor walks away. Xavier helps Markus off the floor. Xavier is an 18-year-old African-American of average height who is casually dressed with head phone draped around his neck. The Chicago south side resident plays baseball for the Panthers.

XAVIER

Why must you all be so juvenile?

MARKUS

Nobody got hurt.

Both walk around the same corner Richard and Nathan fled.

XAVIER

You know how I feel about guns.

A SOPHISTICATED LADY BROWNETTE shakes her head at the players.

MARKUS

It's just a paint ball handgun
rigged to shoot water pellets.

Unwilling to listen, Xavier enters a nearby classroom.

INT. CLASSROOM

A stout female teacher is in front of the lecture room of STUDENTS. Xavier and Markus find seats a few rows behind Richard and Nathan.

TEACHER

...As you all know D.H. Lawrence's language and frank treatment of subjects like sexuality helped change the face of English literature. He challenged world views and the final on his works will be equally as challenging.

Richard turns around and pretends to shoot Markus with his finger. He chuckles with JUSTIN MCCANN IV, a senior from a rich conservative Oak Park, Illinois family. Next to them is DOUGLAS RAMSEY wearing the number 18 on his team T-shirt.

TEACHER

The Nottinghamshire native's book, Lady Chatterly's Lover, became the center of a famous indecency trial, marking an important transition in public views on censorship and the arts.

DOUGLAS

Who cares? I'm so tired of Lawrence.
What can I learn from a faggot anyway?

He laughs and nudges Justin who seems unwilling but joins in with the GUYS around them. Included is African-American student CHRISTOPHER MOORE, wearing a #32 baseball jacket and KENNY SHELDON who's sporting a jersey. A row ahead is GARY.

GARY

Must you always share your ignorance
with the rest of the class?

CHRIS

Have we hit a nerve? GAAAARY.

A SOPHISTICATED LEGGY BRUNETTE shakes her head at the players.

TEACHER

Unfortunately our time is up. But for the record, Lawrence did marry a woman, even though his sexuality was ambiguous. Publicly Lawrence expressed an aversion to homosexuality...just as you clearly have, Douglas. But his writings sometimes indicated otherwise. So who's to say?

The class breaks up.

KENNY

Whatever, man. You are what you write.

Kenny slaps hands with Nathan and Chris before heading out. In the commotion Xavier exits, leaving Markus to catch up.

INT. HALLWAY

Justin emerges from the classroom. He's halfway down the hall when a TALL DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN steps outside another class room. Justin tries to creep by unnoticed.

DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN

Justin.

Justin hesitates but turns around. The gentleman motions him inside the room.

JUSTIN

Yes.

DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN

How's the class coming along?

JUSTIN

Okay, I guess.

DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN

Professor Knotting hinted that you're on the verge of failing her literature course.

JUSTIN

It's bad enough you teach here, but now you're checking up on me?

DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN

Watch your tone. I'm simply making sure you've taken our agreement seriously.

EXT. CAMPUS BUILDING - NIGHT JUSTIN

Why can't you just cut me some slack--

Justin pulls a flask from his jacket pocket and takes a swig as he and Cassandra

DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN He tries head for a silver -- You either pass the course or quit the team. No one in our family is going to play games for the rest of their life.

Xavier.

Just have an eye JUSTIN

But I'm good at it. When will you accept me for who I am?

Before a response is given Justin's girlfriend CASSANDRA BLAKELY steps into the doorway.

DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN

The car pulls Good evening, Cassandra. behind the wheel. Xavier continues to walk.

CASSANDRA

Hello Professor McCann.

Xavier (she kisses Justin's cheek)

Hey sweetie.

I'm not DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN would've

Can you please talk some sense into him about the importance-- out on people.

JUSTIN

--Father, please... never had memories.

CASSANDRA

Be nice.

Xavier sees Gary DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN being on roller blades;

Thank you, dear. Sometimes he needs to be reminded of his manners.

Hey Gary, sorry JUSTIN keep giving

Can we get out of here?

Justin takes Cassandra by the arm and leads her away. She waves good-bye to Professor McCann over her shoulder.

HOPE

Hope to see you at my family's benefit.

DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN

I wouldn't miss it, dear. Justin, expect to finish our conversation later.

EXT. CAMPUS BUILDING - NIGHT

Justin pulls a flask from his jacket pocket and takes a swig as he and Cassandra meet up with Richard. The trio head for a silver Jaguar, passing by Markus and an inattentive Xavier.

MARKUS

Just hear me out...

RICHARD

(yelling to Markus while climbing into the car)
Hey, man. Next time I'm taking you out for good.

The car peels off with Cassandra behind the wheel. Xavier continues to walk.

MARKUS

Xavier!

XAVIER

I'm not feeling you on this. I could've stayed in Chicago if I wanted to dodge pistols and take contracts out on people.

MARKUS

I didn't mean to trigger bad memories.

XAVIER

Let's just squash it.

Xavier sees Gary sitting on the curb strapping on roller blades.

XAVIER

Hey Gary, sorry the guys keep giving you a hard time.

GARY

It's the story of my life.

XAVIER

What are you talking about?

GARY

I've always been the scrawny guy people pick on because I'm quiet and awkward in social settings.

MARKUS

(to Xavier)

--Man can we...

Xavier holds up a hand silencing Markus.

GARY

People don't see me as anything except a loner.

XAVIER

I never understood why people can't accept differences. If there's anything I...

GARY

That's okay. One day I'll have the last laugh.

He skates off into the shadows.

Unbeknownst to Markus and Xavier a YOUNG MAN wearing a red and black bandanna is watching them from behind a tree.

MARKUS

Working on your Good Samaritan badge?

XAVIER

I just feel for him. He's treated even worse since he didn't make the team.

MARKUS

I don't know if that's possible. Anyway, you stopping by Richard's frat party?

XAVIER

I have to lock up at work and then I'll be by to scoop my roommate on my way back to the dorm.

MARKUS

Well, I'll catch you there later.

XAVIER

That's if you aren't too busy chillin'

(MORE)

EXT. RICHARD'S FRAT HOUSE - NIGHT

XAVIER (CONT'D)

Xavier with Justin. You guys been hanging tight lately. What's up with that?

Someone is throwing up in the bushes.

MARKUS

Music is Nothing. You been busy with work so I had to find a new chess partner. Anyway, we cool about earlier?

Strobe lights flash. Dancing shadows are seen through the window. Sprints of laughter and conversation fill the air.

XAVIER

Yeah, just as long as I stay away from the chaos. Later kid.

EXT. CAMPUS - NIGHT

Xavier heads down the street jamming to his headphones. He passes GROUPS OF PEOPLE as he heads towards the Panther student center.

The young man with the red and black bandanna follows a short distance behind Xavier. Xavier belts out a Marvin Gaye tune, then stops mid-verse to see what's wrong with his CD player. He removes his headphones and fiddles with a few buttons.

As Xavier approaches the student center he stops, sensing someone is behind him. He turns quickly, but no one is there.

A COWORKER bounds out of the front door of the student center.

COWORKER

I finished up early so I added the registers and locked up for you.

XAVIER

Thanks, kid. I owe you one.

COWORKER

Don't worry about it. You can check out everything if you want.

As Xavier unchains his bike from a rack he takes another look down the sidewalk. No one is there.

XAVIER

Naw man, that's cool.

EXT. RICHARD'S FRAT HOUSE - NIGHT

Xavier approaches a red brick house riding his bike. SEVERAL STUDENTS stand outside swigging cans of beer. Someone is throwing up in the bushes.

Music is blaring so loud that Xavier's shirt vibrates as he finds a place to park his bike.

Strobe lights flash. Dancing shadows are seen through the window. Shrieks of laughter and conversation fill the air.

INT. LIVING ROOM AREA - NIGHT

Xavier enters the crowded living room. STUDENTS are dancing everywhere. Xavier takes a soda from a cooler and bobs his head to the music while examining the room.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

FIVE GUYS are seated around a smoke filled table with scattered poker chips. The pot is raised and everyone throws in their hand except for one person. Xavier enters, giving a few handshakes.

XAVIER

What's up, fellas?

CARD PLAYER No. 1

Nothing much, just a full house as you can see. We can deal you in next hand.

XAVIER

Naw, kid. I'd love to, but I'm just looking for Kyle. Then I'm outta here.

CARD PLAYER No. 2

That's funny because some guys came by earlier looking for both of you.

XAVIER

Who?

CARD PLAYER No. 2

I don't know. It was about three of 'em wearing these little rags on their heads.

XAVIER

Son-of-a-bi... This is exactly what I don't need.

Justin stumbles out in a T-shirt pulling up his boxers.
Blood trickles down his forehead when he sees Xavier.

CARD PLAYER No. 1
Something wrong?

XAVIER
Don't worry about it, man. I'll catch you
fellas at practice. I need to find my boy.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A WHITE MALE stubble-faced student is weaving through the crowd with a drink in his hand. He stops to dance with a few unsuspecting girl as he heads to the stair case. On his way up, he staggers past a few PEOPLE making out.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Xavier is talking to the leggy brunette from class, HOPE, when he notices the tipsy stubble-faced student bend over at the top of the stairs. Hope excuses herself.

XAVIER
Where you been, kid?

KYLE
Downstairs trying to get my groove on.
You been waiting long?

XAVIER
A few minutes.

KYLE
I'll grab my jacket and we can bounce.

KYLE WALKER is a freshman from Long Beach, California, with a nonchalant attitude and a ladies man reputation.

Kyle bangs into a door twice before it opens. He enters leaving Xavier in the hall singing to the blaring music. Strobe lights flash from downstairs. A COUPLE emerge from another room kissing and head downstairs.

Moments later Kyle bursts back out of his room, visibly shaken. He races downstairs. A puzzled Xavier goes to follow when the door swings open again.

Strobe lights flash to the beat of the music. Cassandra races out the room holding her torn twisted shirt. Tears are streaming down her face and her makeup is smudged.

Justin stumbles out in a T-shirt pulling up his boxers. Blood trickles down his leg. He stops when he sees Xavier.

XAVIER

What the hell is going on?

JUSTIN

Mind your own business, freshie.

XAVIER

What did you do to her?

JUSTIN

I'm not going to tell you again.

Flickering lights flash across their faces. A disgusted Xavier locks eyes with Justin before leaving.

Justin punches the wall in frustration. Drunken baseball players emerge from the same room wearing the numbers 6, 18 and 32 on jerseys. They pat Justin on the back, departing.

KENNY

Way to ride 'em, cowboy.

EXT. AN EMPTY EVANSTON STREET - NIGHT

Xavier peddles his bike like a marathon racer trying to catch up with Kyle, who's walking briskly back to campus.

XAVIER

(a little out of breath)

Kyle...Kyle...slow down, man. What did you see back there?

Xavier brakes and hops off.

KYLE

Nothing, dude.

XAVIER

Well, why did you leave so fast?

KYLE

I don't know. I just didn't expect to see anyone in there. That's all, dude. I got caught off guard. So I left.

XAVIER

Looked like there was more to it than that.

KYLE

Well, you're entitled to your opinion.

XAVIER

Come on, Kyle, I saw Cassandra come out of the room. She was a mess.

KYLE

Well, I wouldn't know nothin' about it. It was dark in there.

The roommates reach the dormitory. Xavier locks his bike on a rack. Kyle opens the door and Xavier runs to catch up.

INT. DORMITORY - NIGHT

XAVIER

Yeah, all right. Whatever the case may be, you left without your jacket.

KYLE

I'll get it later. No big deal.

The guys walk through the hallway, passing a poster about an assassins water pistol game called Kaos.

Tipsy Kyle grabs Xavier from behind and pokes his finger into his back.

KYLE

Don't move, dude, or I'll pop you.

Xavier jerks free from Kyle's clutch.

XAVIER

Man, get off me! What's wrong with you?

KYLE

You gonna sign up for this game, now that the trial round is over?

Xavier, disinterested, digs through his pockets for his other set of keys. He can't find them.

XAVIER

I think I'm going to pass.

Kyle whistles the traditional cowboy western shoot-out tune.

KYLE

(reading the poster)
Man, we can be partners and get
assassins contracts with names
and photos. And our mission...

XAVIER

I'm not trying to do anything
except go to sleep. All right?

KYLE

Come on, dude, I got Markus to do
it. How fun would it be to track
down folks and blast 'em?

Kyle starts making gun shot noises and is acting like he's
in combat.

KYLE

(continuing)

Once we off our first victims, we just
take their contract and the hunt continues.

XAVIER

Man, you're crazy. You better quiet down
before you wake up the whole floor.

Xavier finally finds the right key and walks over to their
room. Kyle snatches the keys and dangles them in front of
Xavier.

KYLE

Dude, you ain't even listening to me.

XAVIER

Boy, you must really be drunk if you're
starting to snatch stuff from me.

Xavier swipes his hand at the keys and misses.

XAVIER

(continuing)

Give me the keys, man. I'm tired.

KYLE

I can just see it now...

Kyle whistles the traditional cowboy western shoot-out
tune.

KYLE

Just two squads battling it out in
the end.

He makes gun shot noises and pretends to die.

XAVIER

(shaking his head)

Yeah, that's if you aren't too stressed
from constantly looking over your shoulder
thinking someone's out to get you. I
already got folks looking for me and I
don't know why. Who needs this?

Xavier lunges towards Kyle for the keys and Kyle dodges.
They tussle and make so much noise SOMEONE opens their door
and glares at them.

XAVIER

(agitated)

See. What did I tell you, man?
Stop playing.

The phone rings from inside their room. Kyle pushes past
Xavier to open the door.

INT. DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Kyle digs the ringing phone from under clothes.

KYLE

Mr. Lover Man here.

(beat)

Oh...I'm sorry, Ms. Johnson. Hold on.

Xavier yanks the receiver from Kyle.

XAVIER

Hey Mom. I know, you'll have to excuse
him. What you doing up so late?

MOTHER (O.S)

I stumbled upon your glove, and wanted
you to know I'm planning to drop it off.

XAVIER

(agitated)

I must've left it last weekend.

Xavier turns off the light and goes to bed. Only a glimmer of light is visible from the room.
 MOTHER (O.S)
 Well, you need to be ready for practice.
 The paper seems to think the team finally
 has a shot at a winning season, thanks to
 new recruits like yourself and...

Xavier sighs and toys with an object on his desk.

MOTHER (O. S)
 Well, I won't keep you.
 XAVIER
 Mom, anyone back home looking for me?

MOTHER (O. S)
 Like who?

Xavier is silent.

MOTHER (O. S)
 Xavier, is something wrong? Those boys
 haven't come up there--

XAVIER
 --Naw. Don't worry about it.

MOTHER (O. S)
 Well, sleep well and I'll see you soon.
 Love you.

XAVIER
 Yeah. Goodnight.

Xavier hangs up. He stares at a photo on his desk of himself and a gentleman. The other half is torn off. Kyle plops into bed. The room is that of typical male students.

KYLE
 Is everything okay at home?

INT. STUDENT CENTER LOUNGE - DAY
 XAVIER
 Yep.

Markus, Kyle and Nathan, wearing the number six on his baseball jacket, come walking around the corner laughing and joking.
 KYLE
 Good. So back to this assassins thing--

XAVIER
 (troubled)
 Not now, Kyle--

Xavier turns off the lights and gets into bed. Only a glimmer from a nearby street light illuminates the room. Xavier turns over. Kyle stares at his roommate in disgust.

INT. CAMPUS BOOKSTORE - DAY

Inside the glass doors a few PEOPLE are looking at Northwestern paraphernalia.

Xavier checks out his last customer. His coworker from the other evening prepares to take over. The STORE MANAGER, a balding guy in his mid-thirties, wearing glasses, motions for Xavier to wait.

STORE MANAGER

Listen up, everybody.

The employees stop their work and gather near him.

STORE MANAGER

Before the late afternoon crowd comes in, I wanted to inform you that a drawer came up short this weekend.

EMPLOYEE No. 1

Whose register was it?

EMPLOYEE No. 2

How much was missing?

STORE MANAGER

That doesn't matter right now. It just better not happen again. Understand?
Now get back to work.

The employees disband with some whispering about how much could have been taken. The manager glares at Xavier while he collects his book bag and headphones. Xavier nods at him and leaves.

INT. STUDENT CENTER LOUNGE - DINING AREA - DAY

Markus, Kyle and Nathan, wearing the number six on his baseball jacket, come walking around the corner laughing and joking. They see Xavier leaving the bookstore.

KYLE

We were just about to come and get you.

Markus throws his arm around Xavier's neck and the group head upstairs to the main floor of the student center.

INT. STUDENT CENTER - LOBBY AREA - DAY

Lines form in front of "Kaos" banners. The guys join in line to sign up. Gary is in a parallel line. The guys size up girls while they wait.

XAVIER

So what are the rules to this, anyway?

KYLE

(sigh)

Dude, it's simple. You can't shoot anyone in class, their dorm room or the bathroom. Hey, what about her?

NATHAN

No way! Too much facial hair...The cafeteria is off limits, too. As well as the library and computer labs -

MARKUS

Hey, nothing's wrong with a little hair.

XAVIER

Are you serious?

KYLE

Dude, that's gross.

A voluptuous GIRL walks by.

NATHAN

Now, that's what I'm talking about. Hey, mama!

GIRL

Dog!

NATHAN

Wuf, wuf, baby.

KYLE

Check out the body on that one. Grrr.

XAVIER

Sounds like a headache. Why even do this?

MARKUS

The thrill. Plus the winners get \$1,000.

XAVIER

What?

NATHAN

Why do you think so many people sign up?
Never hurts to have some extra cash in
your pocket...Mine could use it.

The line moves forward. A GRUNGY LOOKING GUY of average height and build, purposely bumps into Nathan, almost knocking him over.

GRUNGY GUY

You got 24 hours.

He pretends to shoot Nathan with his finger. Nathan looks sullen. The others are taken aback. Gary also notices from his line. Kyle grabs the grungy guy's shoulder.

KYLE

Dude, You need to watch where
you're going.

The grungy guy glances at Kyle and then looks Nathan up and down.

NATHAN

(to Kyle)

Chill man. I'm cool. I'm fine.

Grungy guy jerks his shoulder away. He sees Xavier and pauses before walking away.

KYLE

Talk about rude.

Without looking back the grungy guy gives him the finger. Gary sniggers, then gets shoved by Nathan.

GARY

Hey, what's your problem?

NATHAN

You find something funny, punk?

HOPE stops at the table. XAVIER
 (to Nathan)
 Leave him alone.

GARY
 I don't need you to defend me--

KYLE
 (getting in Gary's face)
 Then mind your business next time.

MARKUS
 Chill, dog.

Gary's line moves forward away from the baseball players.

XAVIER
 (to Nathan)
 You know that guy? He looks familiar.

NATHAN
 (a weary glance over his shoulder)
 Can't say that I do.

Everyone except Xavier signs up for the game.

INT. UNICORN CAFE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Xavier, Nathan, Kyle and Markus eat dinner at the campus hangout. It's very trendy. A juke box is near the front entrance and a stage is in the back.

MARKUS
 Question: What do we do if we end up
 with assassins contracts on each other?

They pause and look at each other.

KYLE
 Hmmmm...how 'bout I shoot first and
 feel sorry about it later.

NATHAN
 Cold, man. We should give a warning.
 Otherwise we aren't going to hang for
 two weeks once we get contracts tonight.

MARKUS
 Sounds fair to me.

HOPE stops at the table carrying a clarinet case. Her roommate JULES accompanies her and takes a seat on Kyle's lap. They kiss, ignoring everyone else.

MARKUS

Can't you put a muzzle on her?

JULES

What, are you jealous that you don't have a girlfriend?

KYLE

Yeah dude, don't hate.

Kyle and Jules continue kissing. Markus pretends to choke them behind their backs.

HOPE

(shrugging her shoulders)

What can I say?

(to Xavier)

Hey, when you want to study for the D.H. Lawrence exam?

XAVIER

I'm free anytime after eight o'clock tomorrow. That okay?

Hope nods.

An argument breaks out across the room. Xavier and company watch Justin grab Cassandra's arm as she tries to walk by.

She tries to distance herself, shaking her head at him. Justin looks like he's been drinking.

CASSANDRA

Don't touch me! How could you do that to me?

JUSTIN

You don't understand. I didn't mean for... I never wanted to hurt you--

CASSANDRA

--Hurt!--

JUSTIN

--Baby, just listen to me--

CASSANDRA

(pointing her finger)

--No. You listen. I've been scarred for life and someone is going to pay for that. I'll make sure of it.

Xavier and his friends watch from their table. Nathan has half a grin on his face. Justin and Cassandra continue to exchange words in the background.

NATHAN

Looks like Mr. Big Shot is in deep shit.

Xavier shoots a look at Kyle. His attention averts back to Cassandra and Justin's argument as Chris, Kenny and Douglas pass by. The baseball players make kissing noises and smack Justin on the butt.

Cassandra slaps Justin and storms out of the restaurant. Justin rubs his cheek. Richard approaches, laughing.

RICHARD

Guess you won't be getting any tonight.

JUSTIN

Shut up.

RICHARD

Sorry, man. But seriously, are you okay? That looked like it hurt.

Justin notices people are watching. He rests his eyes on Markus and the others across the room. Justin brushes past Richard and leaves. Richard follows.

EXT. UNICORN CAFE - NIGHT

Justin kicks over a flower pot as he heads for his car.

RICHARD

Calm down, man. She's just a girl. You can always get a new one.

JUSTIN

What, so you can finally have her?

RICHARD

Don't start.

Justin jumps into his car. JUSTIN
peels off. (snickering)

INT/EXT. If your family was as well off before
we started dated...who knows, you
might've had a chance.

Xavier, Kyle, Nathan, Mark, Jules and Hope exit the
restaurant laughing. RICHARD

(sarcastically)
They each Well it's good to know you're not a
snob like the rest of your family.

Justin pulls a flask from his pocket and drinks.

RICHARD
Jus, you know how you get. You shouldn't
be drinking when you get this upset.

JUSTIN
What, are you my father now? You want to
dictate what I do as well?

INT. UNICORN CAFE RICHARD
That's not what I'm doing--
Cassandra searches a booth. She finds her keys as Xavier
Justin throws his hands up in the air.

JUSTIN
--Shut up, all right? I know I can be a
screw up. But I'm trying.

He takes another swig from the flask.

RICHARD
Give me the flask, okay? You have to
drive us home.

Richard unsuccessfully tries to take the flask.

JUSTIN
See, you don't trust me either. I can't
seem to do right by my family or
Cassandra, nobody.

RICHARD
That's not true. Where's your confidence
gone these days?

XAVIER
I'll go with you JUSTIN
Just get in the car.

Justin jumps into his Mercedes with a hesitant Richard and peels off.

INT/EXT. UNICORN CAFE

Xavier, Kyle, Nathan, Markus, Jules and Hope exit the restaurant laughing.

They exchange good-byes and break up as Cassandra walks toward the entrance. Xavier opens the door for her.

XAVIER

(to his friends)

I forgot something. I'll catch up.

KYLE

I can wait.

XAVIER

That's okay, walk the ladies home.

INT. UNICORN CAFE

Cassandra searches a booth. She finds her keys as Xavier approaches.

XAVIER

I saw what happened earlier. You okay?

CASSANDRA

(startled)

Oh, um, yeah. I'm fine, thanks.

XAVIER

Look. I know what Justin did. You have to tell the police.

CASSANDRA

What? What are you talking about?

XAVIER

The other night, at the party. I saw you--

CASSANDRA

--I can't.

XAVIER

I'll go with you.

CASSANDRA

No. You don't understand. It's complicated.
His family would...

XAVIER

I'll tell the cops what I saw, and get Kyle--

CASSANDRA

--Thanks. But please stay out of this.

She rushes out leaving Xavier standing bewildered.

EXT. NORTHWESTERN CAMPUS - DAY

STUDENTS are looking over their shoulders, clutching water guns underneath clothing and running around trying to squirt each other. Kyle is walking through a quad when he's grabbed from behind. A gun is pointed at Kyle's head.

RICHARD

(trying to disguise his voice)
Did you and your boys enjoy the show
last night at Unicorns?

KYLE

Wha. Wha. What are you talking about?

RICHARD

Don't play dumb. You were all in Justin's
grill. Ya'll need to mind your business.
Where is your buddy Xavier, anyway?

KYLE

Out riding, at the library, the gym...
Dude! I don't know. I...

Richard tightens his grip. Sweat beads form on Kyle's temple. Richard pulls the trigger. The gun lets out a bang and water drips down Kyle's cheek. Richard bursts into a fit of laughter.

RICHARD

You should've seen your face.

Kyle pushes Richard.

KYLE

Dude, that crap wasn't funny.

RICHARD

Oh, it was. Just tell your boys not to get into stuff that doesn't concern 'em.

Richard squirts more water at Kyle before running off.

INT. ATHLETIC CENTER - DAY

Nathan is in the weight room working out alone. He grunts and groans.

A hand grabs Nathan, pulling him off the weight bench. It's the grungy-looking guy. Three other menacing men wearing red and black bandannas surround Nathan. A scared Nathan is punched in the stomach. He falls to his knees.

GRUNGY GUY

I told you what would happen if I didn't get what's mine.

He back slaps Nathan and goes to hit him again.

NATHAN

Wait, wait, wait. I'll get you your money.

Grungy guy grabs him by the face.

GRUNGY GUY

I've heard it before. You never come through.

NATHAN

I swear. I promise I'll have it in two weeks. I'm playing this game--

Nathan lunges at the grungy guy and knocks him to the ground. The other three guys pounce on Nathan. He is kicked, punched and stomped on.

Nathan's water gun falls from his shorts to the floor. Grungy guy grabs a kneeling Nathan by his hair.

GRUNGY GUY

That's it. Wanna be tough? No more nose candy for you.

He smacks Nathan's head into a stand of weights.

The guys scramble to leave when they hear someone coming. An OLDER GENTLEMAN enters and retrieves a towel. Nathan is bent

over as if he's catching his breath. The gentleman glances at him before leaving.

OLDER GENTLEMAN

Don't overdo it there, young fella.

Nathan struggles to stand upright. Moments later the weight room door opens. Nathan reaches for his water gun. Shots ring out. Three bullets rip into his chest.

EXT. ATHLETIC CENTER - NIGHT

The sun is setting. Ambulance lights flash against the building.

Xavier emerges from the entrance alongside Nathan's covered body. He doesn't know who's on the stretcher. Members of the baseball team gather around with STUDENTS, STAFF.

XAVIER

Oh my God. What happened?

STUDENT

Panthers lost an awesome first baseman.
Somebody just up and popped him.

As Xavier processes the information, he swings around and hears snippets from students about four men hanging by the weight room minutes before the shooting.

Shaken, Xavier's attention diverts to the older gentleman talking to a DETECTIVE.

OLDER GENTLEMAN

He looked worn. I just thought he
overexerted himself.

Xavier spins around towards his teammates Justin, Richard and Markus.

XAVIER

Tell me that's not Nathan.

The players are silent. Gary slips out the side entrance of the athletic center unnoticed.

INT. DORM HALLWAY - NIGHT

Hope searches for a room number. PEOPLE are stretched out in the halls studying, talking, writing notes on message

XAVIER

Anyway, why don't we just get down to business. I need all the help I can understanding Lawrence.

HOPE

I thought we should start with...

Xavier flips through a few pages. Tears start streaming down his face. He gets up from his chair. He finds a tissue, and dries his eyes while looking out the window. Hope goes over to him.

XAVIER

I must look like a big baby.

HOPE

No. I didn't know you were close.

XAVIER

Nathan and I were starting to bond. His shooting just brings back memories of someone else I lost.

HOPE

Maybe I should let you be alone.

Hope collects her things. Xavier's tears continue.

XAVIER

Please...stay.

HOPE

How can I help you?...What's going through your head?

Xavier sinks down on his bed. He takes a deep breath.

XAVIER

A year ago I found out that my brother Myles, who taught me everything I know about baseball and I modeled myself after, wasn't the man I thought he was.

Hope kneels beside him.

XAVIER

One night we were leaving a and restaurant, a spray of bullets came
(MORE)

XAVIER (CONT'D)

out of nowhere.

(beat)

By the grace of God, I was able to
duck back inside. But Myles...

Xavier bursts into a deep sob. Hope clutches his hand.

XAVIER

It looked like him and his girl caught every one of those slugs. A rival gang wanted to push drugs in the neighborhood. Myles wouldn't allow it...he was in a gang and I never had a clue.

Angrily, Xavier jumps off the bed. He paces. Hope stares at him, not knowing what to do.

XAVIER

My family is full of secrets. First Myles gets killed on his 21st birthday. Then in the aftermath I learn our mother had an affair with a college flame, so Myles and I don't even have the same father.

HOPE

That's awful.

Xavier stops when he sees Hope's bewildered face. He gathers himself.

XAVIER

I didn't mean to unload all this on you.

HOPE

I'm the one who asked. I don't know what I'd do if I lost either of my sisters and then had to deal with paternity issues.

XAVIER

Markus helped me get through all of it, especially when the cops kept pressing me for information.

HOPE

Were you able to help?

XAVIER

No, I never saw the shooter. It's another unsolved case for the shelves.

HOPE

I'm so sorry. Take my bed.

It's an awkward moment. Searching for something to say, Hope notices Xavier's CD collection and browses through it.

HOPE

Seems like we have something in common.
I love oldies too.

XAVIER

You've got to be kidding me. What do you know about Marvin Gaye, the Spinners?

Xavier pops in a CD.

HOPE

I have soul. I am a clarinet performance major.

XAVIER

(sarcastically)

Excuse me. He comes the closet door folding his clothes.

HOPE

Besides, my father played in a blues and jazz band before landing a gig with the New York Symphony Orchestra.

XAVIER

Impressive.

HOPE

Music has always been a love of mine.
It's in the genes.

Xavier smiles. The two groove to the song when Hope looks over at the clock. It's close to midnight.

HOPE

On, look at the time.

(beat)

Can I ask you a favor?

XAVIER

After what you just had to endure, yeah. What is it?

HOPE

When I left my dorm Kyle was stopping by to see Jules. He's not back...

XAVIER

Say no more. Take my bed.

Xavier gives Hope an oversized jersey. She peeks at Xavier as he changes into sleeping shorts behind his closet door.

HOPE

So how are things with your parents now?

XAVIER

Which pair?

HOPE

The newly discovered?

XAVIER

Strained. If my mom lied about my dad, she'll lie to me about anything. She wants me to be all loving with Jonathan. But how can I when I'm a bastard because of him.

He comes from behind the closet door folding his clothes. Hope climbs into bed.

HOPE

That's one way of viewing things. I know it's a difficult situation, but consider that if it weren't for Jonathan you might not even be here.

XAVIER

Huh...I guess.

(beat)

Tell me, why is it that you can always find the positive in a situation?

HOPE

I don't know. Life is precious and it takes too much energy being negative.

XAVIER

(getting into bed)

True. So what's your family like?

Your mother has probably never caused you this much drama.

Hope is silent.

XAVIER

Did I say something wrong?

Xavier looks up. His MOTHER is in the hall with a TALL GENTLEMAN.

HOPE

No. It's just that I never knew my mother.

XAVIER

Xavier is I'm sorry...Did she just up and leave your father one day?

HOPE

She died giving birth to me.

XAVIER

Whoa. Hope...I...I don't know what to say.

HOPE

That's okay.

XAVIER

If you want to talk about it...

HOPE

He sees the tall gentleman. Some other time.

XAVIER

Sure.

HOPE

It's been a long day. We should probably get some sleep.

XAVIER

Yeah, you're right.

HOPE

Good night.

Hope pulls the covers up and shuts her eyes. Xavier turns off a nearby lamp and watches Hope as she falls asleep.

INT. DORM ROOM - DAY

There's a knock at the door. Xavier and Hope are asleep. The knocking continues. Hope turns over. Xavier awakens and sluggishly makes his way to the door.

XAVIER

(opening the door)

Kyle man, where are your keys?

Xavier looks up. His MOTHER is in the hall with a TALL GENTLEMAN.

MOTHER

No, sleepy head, it's your mother.

Xavier is shocked.

XAVIER

Mom?!

MOTHER

Boy it's ten o'clock in the morning.
Don't tell me you're still in the bed.

XAVIER

Had a long night.

MOTHER

You okay? I heard about the shooting.

He sees the tall gentleman.

XAVIER

What'd you bring him here for? This is not how I'd planned to start the day.

MOTHER

(aggravated)

Let's not play this record again.

XAVIER

I'm not the one who keeps putting it on the turntable.

MOTHER

Hey, I--

XAVIER

Hey what? You're the one forcing my Godfather down my throat. Oh excuse me, that's right, you're my real father now--

The gentleman gets in Xavier's face.

TALL GENTLEMAN

--Don't ever take that tone with Denise again. We made a mistake, but no one can change that now.

XAVIER

So Jonathan you're saying it was okay to let Alex believe I was his son, and for you to negate your responsibilities?

JONATHAN

That's not--

XAVIER

-- You disgust me. No one gave you the right to play with people's lives.

JONATHAN

I would've loved to let the world know you're my blood! But how do you tell a child that the father he adores isn't? It killed me to take second place as your godfather...watch your face light up whenever Alex walked in a room.

XAVIER

Whatever, man.

Xavier backs into the room, putting distance between them. Hope wakes up.

JONATHAN

You're gonna have to learn to get past this, 'cause your mom and I are still getting married. I'm gonna be part of your life whether you like it or not.

XAVIER

Well at least I'll have the angry step-son act perfected. Huh, pops?

Denise removes Xavier's baseball glove from her bag, and hits Xavier in the arm with it. She spots Hope.

MOTHER

What the hell is going on here?

XAVIER

Don't even go there--

MOTHER

Unless you tied the knot and didn't tell me, I know I didn't raise you like this.

Hope jumps out of bed and starts grabbing her things.

door. A muted TV shows the city president talking with a police officer.
 XAVIER
 It's a little too late to start talking morals, Ma.

I'm here to go to school.
 JONATHAN
 This is not like you, son--
 The manager is at his desk looking over papers. He looks up at Xavier and rolls off a chair.

XAVIER
 I'm not your son, and neither of you know what you're talking about.
 Come in and shut the door.

Hope zips her pants.

XAVIER enters and takes a seat.
 HOPE
 I know this looks bad but he's--
 I can't stay for long. I have errands before practice.
 MOTHER
 -- Girl, I have eyes.

Hope makes her way to the door to leave.

HOPE
 (to Xavier)
 I'm so sorry for all of this.

XAVIER
 It's not your fault. Thanks again for last night.

MOTHER
 (looking Hope up and down)
 What exactly are you giving thanks for?

HOPE
 I'll talk to you later.

MOTHER
 Have you lost your mind? Just 'cause you aren't under my roof doesn't mean you can run wild. You're here to play ball and study engineering. Not fool around.

Look, I could've just taken the fifty.
 Xavier grabs his robe, hygiene products and leaves his parents standing in the room.

XAVIER
 INT. CAMPUS BOOKSTORE - DAY

Xavier enters, says hello to workers and heads to the manager's office. Xavier knocks and pokes his head in the

waiting receipts in his hand.

door. A muted TV shows the university president talking with a banner flashing underneath about the shooting.

XAVIER
I'm here to grab my check.

The manager is at his desk looking over papers. He looks up at Xavier and pulls off his glasses.

STORE MANAGER
Come in and shut the door.

Xavier enters and takes a seat.

XAVIER
I can't stay for long. I have errands before practice. What's up?

STORE MANAGER
I was wondering if you had anything to tell me.

XAVIER
Like what?

STORE MANAGER
Like what happened here Sunday night.

XAVIER
Could you be more specific?

STORE MANAGER
(getting annoyed)
If you just come clean I may be willing to overlook things.

XAVIER
(defensive)
What do I have to come clean about?

STORE MANAGER
Look, I could've just taken the fifty dollars out of your check, but--

XAVIER
--For what? Don't tell me you think I took money from the drawer that's short?

Xavier leaps out of his chair in outrage. His boss rises waving receipts in his hand.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD -- STORE MANAGER

It was your register. And you're the one who locked --

XAVIER

--I don't care who locked up!
I didn't take anything!

The store manager slaps the receipts down on his desk.

STORE MANAGER

(sarcastically)

So you're telling me the money just walked out of here by itself.

XAVIER

Man, maybe the receipts were added wrong. Besides, I wasn't the one who --

STORE MANAGER

-- You weren't the one who what?

XAVIER

Never mind.

STORE MANAGER

Boy, I've just about had it. I knew you'd be trouble when I remembered you from articles about that drive-by shooting. The police were sure those guys were going to come back for you and finish off the job.

XAVIER

What's that got to do with anything?

STORE MANAGER

A kid like you wouldn't even be here if it weren't for your baseball scholarship. So don't go pushing your luck around here--

XAVIER

(stomping towards the door)
Man, you're trippin'.

STORE MANAGER

I'm keeping my eye on you.

Xavier walks out and slams the door. Employees pretend to be hard at work. Xavier leaves.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

A baseball flying 90 mph whirls towards home plate. It's smacked into left field.

THE PITCHER

Whoa. What did that ball ever do to you?

XAVIER

Just keep'em coming.

The pitcher throws him another ball. Whack!

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF FIELD - DAY

MEMBERS of the Panther baseball team are unenthusiastically running laps, practicing their pitching, catching, hitting.

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF FIELD - DAY

Gary, the team gopher, is refilling a water pitcher near the dugout. Chris and Douglas are getting water when Douglas knocks over the container on purpose.

DOUGLAS

Oopsy.

The players cackle and leave.

GARY

You're the ones who'll be sorry.

In the distance, COACH MONACO, in his forties with an athletic build, works with players on their batting stance. The plain clothes African-American officer from Nathan's shooting, Detective Sims, walks up.

DETECTIVE SIMS

That's right, you have to make sure your torso is aligned with your hips otherwise you're going to be hitting crap.

COACH MONACO

Excuse me. This is a private practice.

Sims flashes his badge.

Xavier catches his breath and nods.

DETECTIVE SIMS

I'm Det. Sims with Evanston PD. I'm here to talk with you about Nathan.

COACH MONACO

Why don't you fellas go run a few laps.

MARKUS

(to teammates)

I'd rather go home. How does he expect us to function this soon after Nathan's death.

The players mumble in agreement and trot off. Monaco motions for Sims to follow him to the dugout.

COACH MONACO

Detective, how can I help you?

DETECTIVE SIMS

I've already spoken with the administration but I wanted to fill you in...

The two converse momentarily in the dugout. A guy wearing a red and black bandanna lingers in the background watching them and the players. He quickly leaves when Sims and Monaco emerge from the dugout.

The coach whistles for everyone's attention. They gather around. Gary also draws closer.

COACH MONACO

Listen up, fellas. An arrest has been made in Nathan's case. Det. Sims says the police have been trying to catch this guy for some time.

DETECTIVE SIMS

His name is Victor Ruiz. Chicago gang leader of the Raiders. He's linked to everything from prostitution and gambling to drugs.

Xavier is stunned when he hears the gang name. Markus grips his shoulder.

MARKUS

You gonna be okay?

Xavier catches his breath and nods.

DETECTIVE SIMS

The player Ruiz says he's innocent. But it's an open and shut case. Sims approaches

COACH MONACO

He was Nathan's dealer. Seems Nathan was having a hard time supporting his habit.

KENNY

(aside to players)

I told Nathan if you associate with low-lives, you get what you deserve.

The team gives Kenny disapproving looks.

COACH MONACO

Nathan's death could've been avoided if he wasn't using.

(beat)

I'm only going to say this once more. Anyone caught with drugs will be off the team. I...we can't afford another loss.

(beat)

Detective, if that's all, thanks for stopping by.

DETECTIVE SIMS

Sure thing.

Sims walks off. He stops a short distance to light a cigarette.

COACH MONACO

With Nate gone, we have a spot to fill. Richard, I'm looking to you and Xavier as possible first baseman.

Xavier is pleasantly surprised. Markus gives him a pat on the back. Richard shakes his head in aggravation.

COACH MONACO

Now I know some of you think I'm cold-hearted for carrying on business as usual and for having you out here. But I thought you might take comfort in with being each other. And you know it's what Nathan would've wanted.

(beat)

So that's enough standing around for one day, we have a title to prepare for.

The players scatter. Xavier tosses a ball to Markus. Sims approaches them.

MARKUS

Man, sorry you had to be reminded again about Myles.

XAVIER

I knew I recognized him the other day.

MARKUS

Well, hopefully this means there will be one less Raider on the streets.

XAVIER

From your lips to God's ears.

Sims interrupts.

DETECTIVE SIMS

(to Xavier)

I thought you looked familiar. You played for the Hyde Park Indians in high school. First base and center field, right?

XAVIER

Yep.

Sims starts simulating baseball plays.

DETECTIVE SIMS

I remember that throw you made your second year to third base after tagging a man on first. He slammed into you so hard, but you still completed the play. That was the turning point in the game.

MARKUS

(teasing)

That's our Xavier. He's pretty amazing.

DETECTIVE SIMS

You're also Jonathan's godson, right?

XAVIER

(taken aback)

How'd you know that? You know him?

DETECTIVE SIMS

I met him 15 years ago coaching a neighborhood baseball league. He talked about you all the time. I haven't seen him in a few years. How is he?

XAVIER

You know what, I really have to go.

Xavier throws the ball to Markus. Both start walking off.

DETECTIVE SIMS

Well, tell Jon I said hello, will ya?

Xavier nods and heads for the locker room. He and Markus pass by Justin and Richard. Markus makes eye contact with Justin who avoids his glances.

Richard takes a jab at a fence. He's a loud-mouth bad boy known for doing whatever it takes to get what he wants. Gary approaches with towels for the players.

RICHARD

(smacking his towel away)
Dammit!

JUSTIN

What's wrong with you?

RICHARD

This is my last opportunity to grab a scout's attention, and now I may have yet another obstacle in my way. That position should have been mine, no questions. I made sure of it.

He walks off toward the locker room in disgust.

EXT. CAMPUS - DAY

Kyle is hiding behind bushes. He is clenching a water gun, peering at a dorm across the quad. Markus and Xavier sneak up and surprise him.

KYLE

Dude, you scared the crap out of me.

XAVIER

Jumpy, are we? Playing with guns will do that to a person.

KYLE

Don't start with me again. I'd rather hear about your sleep-over with Hope.

MARKUS

Yeah dog, got something to tell us?

KYLE

So, did you finally take your first dip into the cookie jar?

XAVIER

Both of you need to get your mind out of the gutter.

KYLE

Notice he didn't deny anything, dude.

Kyle sees Justin and Cassandra bump into each other leaving the campus clinic, gets silent and looks away. Markus comes from behind the bushes, rubbing his knee.

MARKUS

Man, I must be getting old.

Xavier follows. Kyle stays crouched behind the bush close by. The group watch Cassandra stomp away from Justin.

MARKUS

Speaking of things carnal. You guys heard about Justin's adventures down under?

XAVIER

You talking about that scene with him and Cassandra at the party?

MARKUS

Naw man, that super jock plays for both teams.

XAVIER

Man, that's sick. Besides, he and his boys are some of the biggest homophobes.

MARKUS

True. But I heard a few guys talking about it in the locker room. Justin got drunk one night, revealed his true colors and hit on one of the players.

Kyle fidgets uncomfortably.

XAVIER

Stop lying. He has a girlfriend. Their marriage has practically been arranged since birth. A power play by parents that will issue him into greatness.

MARKUS

(shrugging his shoulders)

Wasn't it D.H. Lawrence who asked why almost every man that approaches greatness tends to homosexuality, whether he admits it or not?

Xavier looks down at Kyle who is dead silent.

XAVIER

What? Where did you get that come from?

MARKUS

I read it someone where on the web.

XAVIER

(to Kyle)

What, no wisecrack, man?

Justin is briskly walking towards them. He reaches for the front of his pants and pulls out his water gun, taking aim.

Markus sees him in time to bolt behind a tree. A BANG goes off behind a confused Xavier.

XAVIER

What the...!

Water whizzes by his head. Xavier drops, rolls and rises to his knees searching his surroundings. No one is there.

SOMEONE wearing red and black runs across the quad behind a dumpster. Xavier takes cover on the side of a building.

Kyle sees the GUY he's been waiting for, round the corner heading towards a dorm. He motions to MARKUS and crawls from behind the bushes. Kyle bumps into Richard who's marching by drawing his gun to help Justin.

Markus frantically shoots at Justin from behind the tree. Justin returns fire. The air fills with sounds like it's the 4th of July. Some STUDENTS stop to watch, others rush to get out of the way.

Markus sees he and Kyle's assassins target head to the dorm entrance. Kyle is right behind the guy shooting.

Out of nowhere Gary charges from the side of the building shooting at Kyle, trying to help his partner-Kyle's target. Someone with a red and black bandanna scurries across the lawn.

GARY

Hurry up and get inside!

Kenny opens the dorm door from the inside and is caught off guard by the commotion. He tries to duck back inside but is hindered by a GROUP exiting with their bikes.

Kenny pats his pocket.

KENNY

Shit! My gun... I can't lose you too.

He tries to take cover by some hedges near the dorm entrance. Meanwhile Markus and Gary's partner run towards the door. Richard, Kyle, Gary and Justin are on their heels shooting.

Markus nearly slams into he and Kyle's assassins target when he stumbles. Markus collapses on the steps.

RICHARD

INT. EVANSTON (slapping hands with Justin)

We nailed that sucka.

GARY

(yelling hysterically)

The lady Is that blood? The officer looks into a nearby room.

GARY'S PARTNER

He's really been shot!

Xavier and students run over. Markus lies in a pool of blood.

Xavier kneels by the body in disbelief. He holds Markus' head in his lap.

KYLE

Somebody call the police!

We need an ambulance!

Xavier rocks back and forth, crying, mumbling. He clutches Markus' hand. Blood sputters out of Markus' mouth.

MARKUS

I...I

XAVIER

Hold on!

(beat)

You're going to be just fine!

Okay! Markus! Markus!

Markus's body starts to shake. Kyle grabs Justin to help put pressure on his wound.

KYLE

Where's the fuckin' ambulance!

XAVIER

Come on, hold on. I can't lose you too.

Richard stands at the foot of the steps shocked. Blood is everywhere.

Markus' eyes roll into the back of his head. His hands goes limp in Xavier's.

Xavier clutches Markus' body and releases a shrill cry. Everyone stares in silence.

INT. EVANSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

An African American couple is standing in the middle of the police station talking frantically with an officer.

The lady lets out a shriek. Her knees buckle, the gentleman catches her. The officer helps them into a nearby room. Xavier watches helplessly through the window of an interrogation room.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

A blood covered Xavier turns around and starts kicking the crap out of a nearby locker.

XAVIER

This should've never happened. If I get my hands on the punk --

Richard gets up from a table into Xavier's face.

RICHARD

--Man, do us all a favor and chill.
Stop all the noise and sit your ass down.

Xavier slams Richard onto the table.

XAVIER

Don't tell me what to do.

Justin and Kyle emerge from the faces of students who were at the shooting to break things up. Kenny and Gary are present.

XAVIER

How would you feel if your best friend
got gunned down for no reason? Huh?
Could you relax? Could you be calm?

RICHARD

(struggling with Xavier)
Get off me! Get off me!

JUSTIN

Come on, man, I know you're upset.
We all are...

(getting emotional)
But this isn't helping anyone.

Justin and Kyle keep trying to pry them apart.

XAVIER

I'll let him go when he answers me.

RICHARD

I'm not playing. Get off me.

KYLE

Dude, we've all been shaken up enough
for one day. None of this is going to
bring Markus back.

A remorseful-looking Xavier loosens his grip and Richard quickly slides off the table.

XAVIER

...I'm sorry, kid. This isn't like me--

RICHARD

--Boy, if this were any other time, I'd
kick your ass. You're lucky.

XAVIER

We all are. None of us got killed playing a game. So spare me the good fortune. All I care about is finding out who had a real gun.

Detective Sims emerges from the crowd with a jittery officer.

DETECTIVE SIMS

That's exactly what I'd like to know.

He scans the room.

DETECTIVE SIMS

Jones, who put all the witnesses in the same room?

JONES

Sorry sir. We ran out of space.

DETECTIVE SIMS

How many times do I have to...Get 'em separated so we can start questioning.

He turns to leave.

DETECTIVE SIMS

And let me know when someone finds out what's on those tapes.

Jones motions for the students to start filing out.

INT. ANOTHER INTERROGATION ROOM - MONTAGE SEQUENCE

Sims and another cop tag team a slew of witnesses.

DETECTIVE SIMS

Why were you in the quad between 3:00 and 3:15 p.m.?

KENNY

I was heading to the registrar's office. I didn't even have my water gun on me.

We were after Gary and his partner.

CUT TO:

KYLE

It's hard to say which direction the shots rang out. The water guns sound real.

CUT TO:

JUSTIN
(saddened)
Nope. I didn't see sparks come from
any of the guns.

CUT TO:

COP
Was there anyone suspicious in the area?

STUDENT
There was a guy wearing the same emblem
like those dudes who popped Nathan.

DETECTIVE SIMS
The Raiders?

CUT TO:

KYLE
Yeah dude, I saw him too briefly. He was
there right before Markus went down.

CUT TO:

GARY
He was tall, had a fair complexion, scar
on the left side of his chin, like a brand.

CUT TO:

COP
Did anyone have a bone to pick with Markus?

XAVIER
He didn't have any enemies.

CUT TO:

KYLE
Richard and Justin were his Assassins.
We were after Gary and his partner.

CUT TO:

RICHARD

(a little nervous)
Yeah I was gunning for him. But I didn't
kill'em.

CUT TO:

KENNY

If either of them dropped a gun afterwards,
I didn't see it.

CUT TO:

RICHARD

Whoever said it is a liar. I don't own a gun.

CUT TO:

DETECTIVE SIMS

Why'd you take so long to lend assistance
when Markus was bleeding to death?

JUSTIN

I couldn't believe what was happening.
I was in shock.

Jones enters the room, interrupting.

DETECTIVE SIMS

Don't you know how to knock?

JONES

You said you wanted to know when
they finished with the tape.

Sims and the cop converse quietly with Jones in the corner.
Justin waits patiently, tilting his chair back on two legs.

COP

Thanks. That should be helpful.

DETECTIVE SIMS

Son. Can you tell me what you were doing
with your gun before you shot at Markus?

JUSTIN

I don't know what you're talking about.

DETECTIVE SIMS

We have a video tape from one of the campus cameras. It shows you crouched over frantically checking the butt of your gun. Were you making sure you had enough bullets in the clip?

JUSTIN

You have a wild imagination. I was just seeing if I was leaking water. I had trouble with my gun earlier. Check for yourselves. They confiscated it at the scene along with everyone else's.

A man and woman's voice escalate outside the room.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Sir, you can't go in there!

PROFESSOR MCCANN (O.S.)

I'll go where I please.

Justin's father bursts through the door.

PROFESSOR MCCANN

How dare you question him without proper counsel?

DETECTIVE SIMS

Who are you?

PROFESSOR MCCANN

Justin McCann III, Professor of Economics.

DETECTIVE SIMS

Well, your son waived his rights.

JUSTIN

Father, I have everything under control.

PROFESSOR MCCANN

If that were true you wouldn't be here.

Jones knocks on the door and enters. Sims gives him a dirty look.

JONES

Before you start yelling, you might want to listen to me first.

(he whispers in Sims ear)

INT. EVANSTON POLICE STATION - NIGHT

DETECTIVE SIMS
You just got real lucky, kid. Not only
is your gun residue test negative, but
another tape shows gun fire coming from
a guy who fled the scene. You can go.

PROFESSOR MCCANN
It's about time.

Justin brushes past the officers and heads out the door,
ignoring his father who's right on his heels.

INT. EVANSTON POLICE STATION - FRONT ENTRANCE

PROFESSOR MCCANN
Slow down, young man. What are you
doing involved in such nonsense?

JUSTIN
I didn't do anything, okay?

PROFESSOR MCCANN
That's beside the point. That assassins
game was childish to begin with, and
look at what has occurred.

Justin stares off into space through the glass door.

PROFESSOR MCCANN
You look at me when I'm talking to you.

Justin brings his eyes to meet his father's.

PROFESSOR MCCANN
You could've tarnished...An arrest
would've had our name in the papers.
Let's hope Cassandra's father doesn't
bring it up at their benefit this week.

JUSTIN
Is that all you care about? Appearances?
I just lost a teammate.

PROFESSOR MCCANN
I realize that, but Cassandra's a lovely,
intelligent girl with a bright future who
loves you as much as the rest of her family.
I won't let you mess that up.
(holding the door open)
Shall we?

INT. EVANSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

The three tired-looking officers emerge from interrogation.

DETECTIVE SIMS

Let's take a look at those tapes again.

If the Raiders are behind this, too-

Xavier and Kyle overhear while leaving a vending machine.

XAVIER

-- No. Tell me those bastards who murdered my brother didn't kill Markus too.

DETECTIVE SIMS

It's just a lead right now.

COP

We don't know that for sure.

XAVIER

Well, what do you know?

DETECTIVE SIMS

It would be improper to comment.

XAVIER

What's inappropriate is how these guys keep taking people's lives and never pay the consequences.

A distraught Xavier begins to stroll off when his mother arrives in time to console him.

INT. XAVIER'S HOUSE IN CHICAGO - KITCHEN - DAY

A pancake is flipped over in a pan. Cooked eggs and sausage rest beside it on the stove. Xavier, fully dressed, enters from a hallway.

XAVIER

That smells wonderful.

MOTHER

Well, sit down and I'll fix you a plate. How did you sleep last night?

Xavier takes a seat at the table as his mother places breakfast before him.

XAVIER

As well as can be expected. I woke up around 2 a.m. and couldn't get back to sleep. So I started looking at old photos of Markus and me to pass the time.

The mother pours herself a glass of orange juice and sits.

MOTHER

The two of you did everything together. Went to the same schools, summer camps, and had your first crush on the same girl.

XAVIER

(laughing)
Angela Dawkins.

MOTHER

Yep. But you never let anything break up the duo. I remember how you boys slaved away on that tree house out back one summer. He made a lift when you broke your arm and couldn't climb up.

XAVIER

We were inseparable.

MOTHER

I hope Evanston PD does a better job at catching the Raiders than Chicago's finest did in Myles' shooting.

XAVIER

I know, one year later and no one's been brought to justice. In the meantime these gangs seem to be taking over.

Jonathan enters from the garage's kitchen door entrance. He kisses Denise on the forehead.

JONATHAN

Looks like I got here just in time.
Xavier, I'm so sorry about Markus.

Xavier doesn't acknowledge his presence. He keeps eating.

MOTHER

We were just talking about all the things he and Markus used to do together.

JONATHAN

How are you holding up?

Xavier is silent until he sees his mother's disapproving glare.

XAVIER

I'm fine. Excuse me, Mom.

Xavier rises from his chair and grabs the trash bag from the garbage can and heads out the back door.

EXT. XAVIER'S HOUSE - BACKYARD

A train screeches by overhead in the distance. Xavier navigates his way through laundry hanging on a clothes line. He finds the big trash can near the alley.

As Xavier throws the bag inside the can a YOUNG MAN of fair complexion exits a backdoor into the neighboring yard.

YOUNG MAN

Xavier.

XAVIER

Chauncey?

The two slap hands over the low fence.

XAVIER

What you doing over this way?

YOUNG MAN/ CHAUNCEY

Visiting my girl, man.

Chauncey and Xavier exit their respective backyard gates and head down the alley.

CHAUNCEY

Sorry to hear about yo boy Markus. I know he was like a brother to you.

XAVIER

Thanks, man.

CHAUNCEY

Me and the fellas were just talking 'bout how we all used to play ball together.

It's ill the way things went down. Folks

on the news say it was during a game.

XAVIER
 (kicking a can)
 Yeah, but cops think the Raiders did 'em.

CHAUNCEY
 Are you serious? I hope you didn't see
 everything go down like Myles' murder.

They reach the end of the alley nearing a corner store and
 make their way around to the front of the block.

XAVIER
 Unfortunately I was there to see all
 the details yet again.

CHAUNCEY
 Again, huh? Yeah it's very unfortunate.
 That can jack a brotha's head up.

XAVIER
 (rubbing his face)
 You telling me. Any rumblings about
 it around the way?

CHAUNCEY
 Naw dog, It's the first I've heard
 about a possible gang connection.

A NEIGHBORHOOD GUY sees Chauncey and throws a gang sign in
 the air with his hands. Chauncey shakes his head in
 disapproval and tries to ignore him.

Xavier spots a DARK SKINNED GENTLEMAN walking up the stairs
 to his house. He doesn't notice the scene with Chauncey.

XAVIER
 Call at school if you hear anything.

CHAUNCEY
 Aw right.

Chauncey trots across the street. Xavier approaches his
 front porch as the sophisticated gentleman is about to ring
 the door bell.

XAVIER
 Hey!

Xavier's face lights up when the gentleman turns around.

XAVIER

There's a Dad! I'm so glad to see you. Alexander begins to side-step towards the door.

DAD

(hugging his son)

I would've come by last night but your mother assured me that you were in one piece.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Father and son enter the house.

XAVIER

Hearing Xavier call Alex, Jonathan look ill. I'm okay. Markus' folks are hurting the most right now...I wish there was something I could do for them.

DAD

I know you do. You haven't even finished eating.

Xavier's mother comes in from the kitchen. She's shocked.

MOTHER

I'm almost done. Alexander, how are you? direction anyway.

DAD

I'm doing well. Just busy as usual, you know how that goes. It'll give us some time to talk. We haven't had much father-son time together lately.

MOTHER

I know all too well. Xavier bolts for his room.

XAVIER

Come on, Mom, not right now.

MOTHER

(sarcastically)

What, did I say something wrong? If you have something to say to me, I don't even matter. Just remember I didn't create you.

Jonathan appears. you speak up. You know what, doesn't even matter. Just remember I didn't create you.

JONATHAN

Everyone's food is getting cold. On the contrary.

DAD

Morning, Jon. is my son. If you don't mind my business...

JONATHAN

Alex reaches for Jonathan as jumps between them. Alex.

There's a moment of awkward silence. Alexander begins to side-step towards the door.

DAD

Well, I guess I should be going. I have a few errands to run. Xavier, I'll give you a call later.

XAVIER

Dad, wait a second. Could you give me a ride back to campus?

Hearing Xavier call Alex "dad" makes Jonathan look ill.

DAD

Sure.

MOTHER

I was going to take you back later. You haven't even finished eating.

XAVIER

I'm almost done, and this will save you a trip. Dad's going in my direction anyway.

DAD

Denise, it's not a problem. It'll give us some time to talk. We haven't had much father-son time together lately.

Xavier bolts for his room.

JONATHAN

(bitterly under his breath)

Father-son, my ass.

DAD

If you have something to say to me, I suggest you speak up. You know what, doesn't even matter. Just remember I didn't create this situation.

JONATHAN

On the contrary. Xavier is my son. If you had handled your business...

Alex reaches for Jonathan but Denise jumps between them.

Xavier simultaneously re-enters the room with his back pack having overheard the tail end of the conversation.

XAVIER

(to Jonathan)

He's been more of a father to me than you'll ever be. Don't you forget that.

DAD

I'll be waiting in the car.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

RESIDENTS ride on a bike path near the shores of Lake Michigan. Cars zip up and down the Lake Shore Drive pausing only to allow PEDESTRIANS to cross at the light.

Xavier and his father Alexander walk barefoot in the sand with their shoes in hand and the museum in the background.

XAVIER

Where does he get off?

DAD

I really wish you didn't have this family stuff to deal with on top of everything else.

XAVIER

It's not your fault.

DAD

But I should have never let Jon get to me when I know he's hurting too.

XAVIER

Whatever. He put himself in the hot seat, forfeiting his rights a long time ago.

DAD

But he's reaching out now. Like I should've when your mother continuously let me know I was neglecting her when starting up the architecture firm. If I had listened, none of this would have happened.

(beat)

And as hard as the truth has been for

(MORE)

DAD (CONT'D)

me to face, the one thing that's always been clear, is Jon cares about you, despite his faults. And it's difficult for him to see us close.

XAVIER

What. (throwing a rock in the water)
He better get used to it.

Alex squats in the sand and glances across the water toward Evanston.

DAD

It may take time to sink in, but you have what a lot of disadvantaged youth would kill for.

XAVIER

What might that be?

DAD

Alex grabs Two men who want to be your father.

XAVIER

EXT. BASE I know, but--

DAD

--All I'm saying is recognize what you have before it's too late. At some point we all have to move forward. I should've set a better example, instead my actions further fueled your anger towards Jon. And for that I am sorry.

Xavier picks up a stick and draws in the sand. A moment of silence passes between them. Xavier looks at his watch.

XAVIER

I should probably be getting back.

Both get up brushing sand off their clothes.

DAD

Why don't you come stay with me for a few days.

XAVIER

I might if it wasn't such a commute.
You know how much I hate riding the "L".

DAD

I know. I just miss having you around.

(beat)

And I can't bear to lose another son.

XAVIER

What. I'm not going anywhere.

DAD

Myles wasn't supposed to either. With the Raiders stirring up trouble, I'd feel better knowing you were safe with can me. I can get you a car--

XAVIER

--Dad, dad. I'm going to be okay. Promise.

(beat)

Myles' case is over. The police aren't even sure of the Raider's involvement. Don't worry, they aren't after me.

Alex grabs the back of Xavier's neck and pulls him into an embrace.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

A whistle is blown. The Panthers break from the field and hustle into the locker room.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Gary jumps suspiciously away from Xavier's locker when several players enter the locker room and start to undress, heading for the showers. He hurries off.

DOUGLAS

(laughing with teammates)

Looks like we finally put the fear of God into that little squirt.

A weary Richard pllops down on a bench and begins to remove dirt from his cleats.

As the players disperse to other areas of the locker room Richard checks his surroundings. He opens his locker and pulls a safe box off the shelf. Inside is a gun. He checks the clip.

Justin approaches and Richard covers it with a towel.

JUSTIN
That was a terrible practice.

RICHARD
I know. I wasn't feeling it, but you were way off your game.

JUSTIN
Kept thinking about Markus. I wish I'd stayed home like some of the other guys. Coach should've canceled. All he seems to care about is a winning season.

RICHARD
Well, I'm not going to be of any help if I don't get my head together.

JUSTIN
Keep playing like today, you can kiss first base good-bye.

RICHARD
I know. I thought you had some place to be.

JUSTIN
I do. You trying to get rid of me?

RICHARD
No. No. I --

JUSTIN
I'm just kidding, man. I'll catch you at the campus memorial services later.

Justin leaves. Richard tucks the gun in his pants and bolts in the opposite direction.

INT. CAMPUS BOOKSTORE - DAY

Kyle pops in the store with Jules. They head over to Xavier who's counting money from his register. Xavier's boss comes out of his office and watches from the background.

JULES
How you holding up?

Xavier shrugs his shoulders. Jules excuses herself and looks around the store.

KYLE

Where you been, you all right? Dude, coach Monaco gave our answering machine an earful about you missing practice.

XAVIER

I couldn't bring myself to play ball today without Markus.

KYLE

Dude, I feel you. I had a hard time sleeping last night. Everything keeps re-playing over and over in my head.

(beat)

Sims was back on campus today trying to see what else he can turn up.

XAVIER

Is there anything new?

KYLE

A press conference. They found casings at the scene. Dude, but none of 'em match the ones from Markus' body.

Xavier stops counting.

XAVIER

What...

KYLE

It's crazy but it looks as if more than one person had an agenda.

XAVIER

Only a coward would hide behind a game.

Jules walks back holding up a copy of the school newspaper.

JULES

Whoever it is won't get another chance. Administration is calling a stop to Kaos.

XAVIER

About time. It should've never been allowed in the first place.

Jules rubs Xavier's arm.

KYLE

Dude you're right. I...I shouldn't have talked 'em into playing.

JULES

Let's not start blaming ourselves.

Xavier and Kyle make eye contact.

KYLE

I just can't believe he's gone.

XAVIER

Neither can I.

Jules pulls them both into a hug. Xavier glances over her shoulder. His boss watching like a hawk.

XAVIER

Thanks for coming by guys.

(pulling away)

I better finish up here.

Kyle looks over at Xavier's boss.

KYLE

No problem. We'll check on you later.

Kyle and Jules exit. Xavier's boss advances towards him.

XAVIER

Two hundred thirty, forty-one, two..

Xavier glances at the receipt and is perplexed. He starts to count over.

STORE MANAGER

Problem?

XAVIER

Uh...I'm just wrapping up.

Xavier is baffled as he finishes the second count.

STORE MANAGER

Allow me.

He shuffles through the dollar bills, then the receipts.

STORE MANAGER

I was right about you the first time.

XAVIER

I swear I didn't take--

STORE MANAGER

The proof's right here. I wasn't here when you came up short before, but there's no denying the truth this time.

XAVIER

Man, I didn't even lock up last week. Ethan did it. I wasn't even here.

STORE MANAGER

What do mean you weren't here?

XAVIER

I...I stepped out for a minute but when I came back--

STORE MANAGER

Stop trying to put the blame on someone else. I've caught you red-handed.

Xavier stretches his arms out like Christ crucified. Customers and staff gawk at them.

XAVIER

You didn't catch me doing nothing. Go ahead, search me.

The boss notices onlookers and brings things down a notch.

STORE MANAGER

Listen Xavier, you can either give the money back or--

XAVIER

--Or what!--

STORE MANAGER

You're outta here. Fired!

XAVIER

You can't do that.

STORE MANAGER

I just did.

A ball whizzes toward the
the last But I haven't done anything. For the next one and continues playing.

STORE MANAGER

I don't want to hear it. Get out of my face.

Well, speak up next time. How'd you know I was here?

XAVIER

Fine! I'm going straight to the dean and then to your buddy Monaco.

Bye.

STORE MANAGER

Wait a second...Shit! You can work here, but only in the stock room. Try supporting yourself on that salary.

Do you want anything special today?

XAVIER

If this job wasn't tied to my scholarship you would've just dismissed me? Even though you have no proof of anything.

You came all alone.

STORE MANAGER

You're in no position to question me. I suggest you get out of my face before I change my mind.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

A frustrated Xavier whacks away at baseballs mechanically thrown at him as he listens to his CD walkman. The lights of the stadium glow.

Xavier is startled by movement behind him. He yanks his headphones off and stands ready to clobber someone.

Be careful if I see you.

XAVIER

He takes. Who's there?

A figure emerges from the shadows.

I was. Jules dropped me off before heading to the Blue.

HOPE

It's just me.

Good. But that's

XAVIER

You know it's not nice to sneak up on people like that. Taken away from me.

He smacks another ball which against a light post.

HOPE

Sorry...I was just waiting quietly until you took a break...

Not through any fault of your own.

A ball whizzes toward the pair and Xavier bats it away at the last minute. He positions himself for the next one and continues playing.

XAVIER

Well, speak up next time. How'd you know I was here?

HOPE

Kyle.

XAVIER

Figures.

(beat)

Do you want anything specifically?

HOPE

I hadn't seen you all day and...

XAVIER

You came all the way down here alone, with everything that's been happening, because you haven't laid eyes on me. Oh that's cute.

HOPE

You just lost your best friend and I remember how you were after Nathan. When you didn't show for the memorial I got concerned...

XAVIER

--I really appreciate that, but I'd be careful if I were you.

He takes another swing.

HOPE

I was. Jules dropped me off before heading to the Blakely benefit.

XAVIER

Good. But that's not what I'm talking about. Everyone who I've ever really cared about has been taken away from me.

He smacks another ball which bangs against a light post.

HOPE

Not through any fault of your own.

XAVIER

Whatever, I wouldn't get too close to me if I were you.

HOPE

It's kinda too late for that.

Xavier stops and gazes at Hope.

XAVIER

Really...

HOPE

Huh...uh...well, now that I've seen you're okay, I'd better get back so I can study.

A ball flies by Xavier's head breaking the awkward moment as Hope walks off. He turns the machine off.

XAVIER

Wait. I'll walk you, since Jules is off rubbing elbows with socialites.

INT. SHERATON HOTEL - DOWNTOWN CHICAGO - NIGHT

MEN and WOMEN dressed in tuxedos, elegant gowns and masks, grace a grand ballroom. Some are on the dance floor, others are seated at tables or standing around the room conversing. Richard approaches an older gentleman who has just finished talking with Professor McCann. A sign on the head table reads: Blakely Diabetes Fund-raiser.

A level above in the balcony other socialites mingle. Cassandra stands with her mask in hand looking down at the guests. Beside her is a stunning YOUNG WOMAN.

CASSANDRA

Richard is trying so hard to get in daddy's good graces. He's been so wonderful, I pray he can gain some ground.

YOUNG WOMAN

I know the circumstances are tragic, but this is your chance. You've been wanting out of the relationship with Justin. Have you shared what happened with your parents?

CASSANDRA

I don't know how. He has them all so snowed that they'd never believe me anyway.

YOUNG WOMAN

What about the other...

She pauses to make sure no one's listening.

A MASKED GENTLEMAN approaches and stops close by upon hearing the ladies.

CASSANDRA

It still has to be handled.

The gentleman pulls down his mask down slightly. It's Justin.

JUSTIN

I can never say I'm sorry enough. I'll make sure no one ever touches you again.

Justin pulls his mask back over his eyes and leaves.

CASSANDRA

Once all this is behind me. I have to figure out the rest of my life.

YOUNG WOMAN

What do you mean? You can do whatever you want. You're a Blakely.

CASSANDRA

That's part of the problem. I never know if doors open because of my merit or who I am.

(walking to join guests)

It's time I start to discover who I am without the expected relationships and everything else.

EXT. HOPE'S DORMITORY - NIGHT

Xavier lets the kick-stand down on his bike and escorts Hope to the front entrance.

HOPE

...my father's told us all he can about our mother.

EXT. CAMPUS - NIGHT
XAVIER
Sounds like it. Well, here we are.

An upbeat Xavier slides behind his bike towards his dorm.
Someone waves at him as a record
breaking...
HOPE
All safe and sound. Thanks.

She starts to insert her key in the door.

OF STUDENTS swarm out his door yelling for
Xavier, for...
XAVIER
Hey, my apologies for the attitude
earlier. I had trouble at work, but
shouldn't have taken it out on you.

No one stops...
HOPE
All is forgiven.

A moment later...
XAVIER
I'm surprised you didn't stomp off.

they set out after the runner...
HOPE
I'm not one to easily back down.

the arm...
XAVIER
That's good to hear.

Xavier rubs her arm.

He did...
XAVIER
You know, a wise man recently told me to
recognize the things I have before me.

HOPE
Is that right?

XAVIER
Yeah.

Xavier leans in and kisses Hope softly on the lips. Hope
lifts her hands to his face, kissing back. They part, but
maintain eye contact. Hope smiles.

shot at me but was... of bullets. Chris
was... on the... with his water gun.
HOPE
Good night.

Xavier stands silently in disbelief. A STUDENT taps the
advisor's...
XAVIER
You've already ensured that.

Xavier waits for her to enter the dorm. He turns and leaves
with his hands stuck in his letter jacket.

EXT. CAMPUS - NIGHT

An upbeat Xavier strides beside his bike towards his dorm. Someone wearing dark clothing zips by him at a record breaking pace almost knocking into Xavier.

He doesn't pay much attention to the runner until a GROUP OF STUDENTS swarm out his dorm's front door yelling for Xavier, for anybody, to stop the runner.

XAVIER I don't
Why? What's going on?

No one stops to answer as they continue in hot pursuit. A few nearby people join in the chase.

A moment later the dorm residential advisor races out on his cell phone with MORE STUDENTS pulling on clothing as they set out after the runner. Xavier grabs the advisor by the arm.

XAVIER
Why the commotion? That guy broke outta here like he just killed somebody.

ADVISOR
He did.

XAVIER
What?!

ADVISOR
Chris was shot a few minutes ago.

XAVIER
By who?

ADVISOR
Nobody saw. I burst into his room in time to see him jump out the window. He tried to shoot at me but was out of bullets. Chris was slumped on the bed with his water gun.

Xavier stands silently in disbelief. A STUDENT taps the advisor's shoulder.

STUDENT
People are crowding around Chris' room.

ADVISOR

Make sure no one goes in there and touches anything. I wish the cops would hurry up. I don't know where the hell campus security is.

Justin trots towards them out of breath. He's still wearing his dress pants but with a black pull over sweat shirt.

JUSTIN

That guy must run track. I don't think anyone caught up with him.

The other runners straggle back as Justin, Xavier and the advisor make their way inside the dorm lobby. A frazzled Richard is among the runners. He wanders off by himself unnoticed, dusting dirt and leaves off his dark shirt.

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

The advisor pats a few of his residents on the back.

ADVISOR

Nice try, guys. Don't go too far. I'm sure you'll be needed for questioning.

XAVIER

(to Justin)

How'd you get involved in all this?

JUSTIN

(still panting a bit)

I was coming to see Cassandra when... they flagged me down to help.

ADVISOR

I'm surprised he wasn't easier to catch after jumping out a second story window.

XAVIER

He should have been hurt.

(to Justin)

I thought you both were at a benefit.

JUSTIN

We were. It wrapped up early.

Kyle looks as if he's having a disturbing epiphany.

ADVISOR

(caught up in his own thoughts)
What's perplexing is when I turned Chris
over he said, "I'm really sorry."

JUSTIN

What was that about?

ADVISOR

I have no idea.

Xavier has heard enough and darts upstairs.

INT. DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Xavier storms into his room to find Kyle pacing the floor.

XAVIER

What the hell is going on around here?

KYLE

Dude, I know. This is getting to be a
bit much.

XAVIER

I take it you already heard all the
details. I thought this Kaos crap was
over. Why would Chris have his unless
someone was pointing one at him.

KYLE

The administration called the game off.
But how do you control a campus this size?

XAVIER

Did you notice anything strange going on?

KYLE

Dude, the radio was playing and I was
talking to Jules when I heard...I
that guess was gun-fire.

XAVIER

Kid, something's not right. We've had
three deaths in less than a week and
all of them have been baseball players.
Did the team do something to somebody?

Kyle looks as if he's having a disturbing epiphany.

XAVIER

You all right, man?

There's a loud banging at the door before Kyle can respond. Xavier swings the door open and sees Justin.

Kyle sinks back a bit. Simultaneously he and Xavier catch a glimpse of paramedics removing Chris' body from his room.

Chris' arm slides from the stretcher revealing the number 32 on his jersey sleeve.

JUSTIN

Unbelievable, isn't it?

KYLE

That's an understatement.

XAVIER

At this rate it's not safe being a member of the baseball team.

JUSTIN

Evanston PD is downstairs. They want a statement from you about any details you can give on the runner.

XAVIER

I wish I could. All I remember is he was wearing black. He was like a blur.

JUSTIN

Yeah. I only saw him from behind.
(looking at his own black jacket)
And unfortunately too many people wear black. Paramedics did find a Raiders bandanna under the bed next to Chris.

XAVIER

Does that gang have some type of vendetta?

STUDENT (O.S.)

(yelling)

Hey, guys. The cops want everyone downstairs. Now.

Reluctantly, the three make their way down the hall.

KYLE

But dude. Why would a Chicago gang be popping off a bunch of kids in the burbs?

JUSTIN

I don't know. Could be drug related. That's why the police think they did Nathan.

XAVIER

No way. Markus would never touch the stuff.

JUSTIN

I wouldn't rule anything out at this point. I mean, how well do you ever really know a person?

Xavier halts and looks like he has been slapped in the face as they are passing Gary's room. Gary gets spooked and quickly closes the top drawer of his dresser.

GARY

Didn't see you standing there.

KYLE

He's so scary.

Justin shakes his head as the group heads for the staircase without Gary.

Kyle causes them all to stop when he comes to a halt in front of Chris' room. The place looks like it has been ransacked. A blood stain covers his bedspread.

KYLE

Dude...

XAVIER

It's time to call in a few favors... this has got to stop... otherwise who knows which one of us might be next?

Xavier and company descend the stairs.

Gary peers into the hall, making sure they have moved along. He steps back inside his room, reopening the drawer. He throws a dark dirty shirt over a sheet of paper. He shuts the drawer.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Church bells ring. A crowd dressed in black scatter away from an open grave at the conclusion of a prayer. The Panthers are present as well as Xavier's parents, Hope, Kyle, Jules and Detective Sims.

A car along the roadside back-fires causing several people to nearly jump out of their skin. Richard reaches for the bulge at the back of his pants. Everyone's on edge.

Markus' tearful mother kisses Xavier on the cheek before departing. Kyle and Hope each rest a hand on his shoulder.

XAVIER

I'll meet you guys at the car, okay?

Kyle nods and Hope gently rubs Xavier's arm. Hope, Kyle and Jules leave. Xavier places a flower on the casket. He lingers for a moment, turns to leave and nearly collides with Chauncey.

XAVIER

My fault, man.

CHAUNCEY

That's okay, dog.

XAVIER

(looking at the grave)

This should've never happened. Someone else got killed last night. I'm going to need your help.

CHAUNCEY

With what?

XAVIER

To see how the gang's involved in this.

CHAUNCEY

The Raiders have been lying low for awhile. But I'll do what I can.

XAVIER

That's all I'm asking.

Mourners pass them as they converse. Cars by the roadside start to pull off. In the background Jonathan, Xavier's mother Denise, and Sims catch up under a blooming tree.

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF CEMETERY - DAY

JONATHAN

Wish we could have gotten together under better circumstances.

SIMS

Me too. I was shocked when I saw your godson in practice...

Xavier's mother looks at Jonathan.

SIMS

What did I say?

MOTHER

No. You've just missed out on a lot.

SIMS

Like what...?

Sims catches a glimpse of Xavier and Chauncey out of the corner of his eye. Sims stiffens and stares back at them again. Chauncey has a scar on the left side of his chin.

SIMS

Who's the kid with Xavier?

JONATHAN

(straining to see)

Someone from the neighborhood.

Sims reaches into his vest and pulls out a notebook. He flips to a description and glances at Chauncey.

SIMS

Xavier wouldn't happen to have any gang ties?

MOTHER

What? Of course not!

JONATHAN

Why would you ask such a thing?

In the background, Xavier and Chauncey hug and part ways.
Xavier approaches.

SIMS

The kid he's talking with...

XAVIER

(kissing his mother)
I'll call you later Ma.
(ignoring Jonathan)
Detective.

MOTHER

Baby, why don't you come home with us
until these cases get solved.

XAVIER

I'm not safe at home, either, remember?

MOTHER

But at least I can keep an eye on you.

XAVIER

As long as I have God, I'll be okay.
Isn't that what you always say?
Besides, the team has security now.

Xavier kisses her and leaves. Sims swings his head to locate Chauncey and grimaces. He's nowhere in sight. Sims goes to look for him.

SIMS

Excuse me.

EXT. CEMETERY ROAD - DAY

Xavier strolls toward Kyle and Hope who are leaning on a car. Xavier inserts his hands into the pockets on his letter jacket. He pulls out a necklace with a medallion on it and looks perplexed.

HOPE

Have you come bearing gifts?

XAVIER

It's not mine to give.

JULES

Who does it belong to?

The phone disconnects. CHAUNCEY places his cell on the passenger seat. I don't know. the same from the medallion.

KYLE
Dude, it was in your pocket. He turns onto the expressway. A sign reads: Evanston, 20 miles.

XAVIER
EXT. MONT But I don't know how it got there.

KYLE
Let me see it.
The university president and a date accompanied by faculty and the police department. A SWARM OF STUDENTS listen attentively. Richard and Cassandra are
He yanks the chain from Xavier and fingers the torch crest.

KYLE
Dude, I don't know why, but I think only I've seen this somewhere. ly punished... And until the murders are solved, Evanston

XAVIER
Me too. as your full cooperation as they complete their investigations...

HOPE
Students Can we figure this out on our way to campus.

JULES
Yeah, I have some studying to do.

Jules heads for the driver's side. The guys are still enamored with the necklace as they get in.

INT. SPORTS UTILITY VEHICLE - DAY

A leather-clad hand dials a cell phone and raises it to an ear. The phone rings.

VOICE (O.S.)
So?

Students push their way through the crowd leaving.
The unseen driver checks the left side mirror before switching lanes. A chin mark glares back in the reflection.

CHAUNCEY
Where was the when I loaded it?
Everything is fine. Thanks to all the other chaos, no one is the wiser.

VOICE (O.S.)
you... really time. He can't
Very good. Proceed. people like that no matter whose family he comes from.

He gives Cassandra a brief hug.

The phone disconnects. Chauncey places his cell on the passenger seat. The Raiders gang symbol is on the ash try, the same from the medallion.

Chauncey pulls a gun from between the seat. He turns onto the expressway. A sign reads: Evanston, 20 miles.

EXT. NORTHWESTERN CAMPUS - DAY

The university president stands on a dais accompanied by faculty and members of the police department. A SWARM OF STUDENTS listen attentively. Richard and Cassandra are present.

UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT

Anyone caught with a gun, even if it only holds water will be severely punished... And until the murders are solved, Evanston PD will be patrolling campus. Please give them your full cooperation as they complete their investigations...

Students are on edge and afraid.

STUDENT

Skip finals. I'm outta here.

CASSANDRA

Maybe you should go home, too.

RICHARD

Trust. No one's going to mess with me.

UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT

...Grief and counseling sessions are still available...

Students push their way through the crowd leaving.

CASSANDRA

I'll (in a flippant tone)
Where was the counseling when I needed it?

RICHARD

Justin should've never mistreated you...realized you needed time. He can't force himself on people like that no matter whose family he comes from.

He gives Cassandra a brief hug.

RICHARD

(continuing)

Screw a shrink. You got quicker results coming to me.

CASSANDRA

True. You've really come through.

Justin bounds toward them. The University president continues to speak in the background.

RICHARD

I told you I would take care of you.

JUSTIN

Take care of what?

RICHARD

Oh...getting the notes from...our D.H. Lawrence class so I can help Cassandra study.

JUSTIN

(brushing hair out of her face)

I can help.

Cassandra backs away in disgust. Justin turns red.

CASSANDRA

If I wanted you--

JUSTIN

--Don't be like this, okay...can we please just spend some time together and work this out--

CASSANDRA

--I can't do this right now.

(to Richard)

I'll catch you later.

Richard shakes his head.

JUSTIN

(grabbing her hand)

Cassandra--

RICHARD

--Just back off, man--

JUSTIN

--Butt out.
(reaching for Cassandra)
Don't walk away from me--

CASSANDRA

(pulling away)
--Don't. I see you still can't take
no for an answer.

She storms off. Justin goes to follow but Richard stops him.
People are watching.

RICHARD

Man, leave this alone for right now.
We need to go anyway or we'll be late
for practice.

INT. GYMNASIUM - DAY

The gym is locked down like a fortress. Douglas arrives late
and is searched by security.

Coach Monaco leads the team through push up drills.

COACH

(to Douglas as he falls in line)
You're late.
(beat)
Up...After the recent tragic events, I
can't reiterate this enough. Be safe
...down...the season starts in two
weeks...up...we've lost three players
and I can't bare to loose another.

RICHARD

(chuckling)
I might have first base sewn up after all
if the shooter keeps this up.

Xavier's snaps his head toward Richard.

XAVIER

I can't believe you said that.

COACH

What was that?

Everyone's silent. Sweat drips off their faces.

JUSTIN

(under his breath to Richard)

Better watch it.

RICHARD

I'm not scared of him.

COACH

Down...as I was saying. I couldn't bare to lose another one of you...up. Until they catch the bastard, you're on a 10 o'clock curfew and will be watched round the clock...down...

JUSTIN

(aside to Richard)

I wasn't talking about Xavier. I'm the one to fear...What's up with all the time you been spending with my girl?

RICHARD

You're the one who messed up. She realizes McCann doesn't mean well bred.

JUSTIN

So, what? Were you waiting for a chance to move in? I knew you still had a thing for her--

Coach Monaco slaps his hand on the floor and startles them.

COACH

Are you boys listening to me...I don't need any more grief. I already had Det. Sims in here searching lockers...up...so be in when I make dorm checks... Down. Now let's make some tracks.

He blows a whistle. The tired team staggers outside.

RICHARD

Justin, I would've never pushed up on Cassie if--

JUSTIN

-- So it's "Cassie" now, is it?

Justin brushes past him. Richard gives Xavier a dirty look as they head out.

EXT. TRACK

Justin sides up with Xavier who's in a steady stride.

JUSTIN

Were you serious about the comment
you made the other night...doing
your own digging into these murders?

XAVIER

Why?

JUSTIN

This last one really rattled a lot
of us...figured two heads are better
than one. What are you planning to do?

Xavier gives him a side glance. He says nothing.

JUSTIN

Come on, man. I know we haven't always
gotten along, but if we get this punk
behind bars before another player gets
popped off, we'll all breathe easier.

XAVIER

What makes you think this isn't over?

JUSTIN

I don't. I'm just saying you can't
depend on those damn rent-a-cops.

XAVIER

Yeah, well I already have a friend
helping me. Besides, I don't work with
people who force themselves on women.

Xavier sprints away, passing up Richard who has a limp.
Coach Monaco notices.

COACH

Boy, what's wrong with you?

RICHARD

I tripped up some stairs. I'm fine.

COACH

Are you trying to sabotage my season?
Get inside and let Jim look at it!

Richard hobbles inside. A few players jog past Justin as Monaco blows his whistle.

KENNY

(to Justin)

Shower time.

INT. UNICORN CAFE - NIGHT

Kyle strolls past Cassandra and Richard at a table hunched over books. He plops in a booth with Xavier and Hope who are giving a young waitress their order.

WAITRESS

(flirting with Kyle)

And what can I get for you?

KYLE

I'll take your phone number to go.

She giggles and practically skips away. Xavier gives him a pound and shakes his head.

HOPE

I'm sure Jules will be happy to know you're on your best behavior.

KYLE

Dude, come on. I wasn't serious. Jules knows she's the only one for me.

(to Xavier)

Tell your girl to chill, dude. Here.

He slings Xavier mail. The waitress brings over fries and Kyle grabs a handful. The waitress slips him a small sheet of paper. Xavier smiles and shuffles through the mail.

XAVIER

Junk...junk...telephone bill...

He turns over an envelope without a return address, just Xavier's name in black marker. He peels it open.

KYLE

So tell me...is Jules happy with the way things been going between us?

HOPE

You really think you're all that, don't you?

INT. BOOK STORE STOCK ROOM - NIGHT

KYLE

I haven't heard any complaints.
Hope notices Xavier's pale face.

HOPE

You okay?

Xavier places a note on the table.
It reads: Silence is golden.

Hope and Kyle look uneasy.

KYLE

Dude, who wants you quiet and what for?

Xavier shrugs.

HOPE

Perhaps you should show this to Sims.

KYLE

What for? It's just a prank, dude.

HOPE

Or, dude! It just might be tied to all the mess going on around here lately...

Xavier snaps out of his trance when Richard, seated at a nearby table, drops a book.

XAVIER

She's right. I'll call when I get to work.

Richard peeks over at them as he packs his book bag.

RICHARD

No more, all right. It's getting out of control. Too many people are getting hurt.

CASSANDRA

But you promised. Be a man and finish what you've started.

Richard swings his bag over his shoulder, limps and puts money on the front counter and leaves with Cassandra right on his heels.

INT. BOOK STORE STOCK ROOM - NIGHT

Xavier stacks boxes. He crosses in front of the stock room door and spies his coworker talking with A GUY wearing a Raider's colors.

Xavier lowers the volume on his headphones and accidentally knocks over a container. The pair quickly leave.

Xavier comes out of the room and fishes a business card out of his pants pocket. He grabs a phone and dials.

DEEP VOICE (O.S.)
Evanston Police Department.

XAVIER
Detective Sims please.

DEEP VOICE (O.S.)
He isn't here. Wanna leave a message?

There's a knock at the door. Sims is on the other side of the glass with two officers.

XAVIER
Never mind.

He lets the officers in.

XAVIER
Detective, I just called looking for you.

SIMS
Funny. You've been on my mind, too.

XAVIER
I have some stuff to tell you.

SIMS
We might have been able to work something out if you would've spoken up sooner.

XAVIER
Come again?

SIMS
Xavier Johnson...You are under arrest for the murders of Markus Wilson and Christopher Moore.

XAVIER

What? You're joking!

Sims motions to the officers. One pulls out handcuffs and restrains Xavier. He struggles with them while being led out the store.

SIMS

You have the right to remain silent...

INT. OUTSIDE BOOKSTORE AREA - NIGHT

Students watch in disbelief as Xavier is escorted out of the building. Chauncey creeps from the shadows. His cell phone rings.

CHAUNCEY

Missed 'em. The cops got 'em.

VOICE (O.S)

(upset)

His coworker was supposed to be setting things up. What's going on?

CHAUNCEY

(scared)

I'm not sure. But I'm on top of it.

VOICE (O.S)

That's what I like to hear. If all else fails, we have people on the inside.

Chauncey hangs up and glances inside the store. Employees are huddled together conversing. One of them frantically dials the phone. Chauncey moves on.

INT. BOOK STORE - NIGHT

The store manager rushes in. The employee slams the phone receiver down.

EMPLOYEE

I was just trying to reach you.
How'd you hear about it so fast?

STORE MANAGER

What are you talking about? I stopped by to make sure Xavier is working.
What are you doing here?

EMPLOYEE

The cops came and arrested him.

STORE MANAGER

Come again.

EMPLOYEE

For the campus murders.

The store manager shakes his head.

EXT. EVANSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Cars pull in and out of the station's parking lot. The streets are quiet and serene.

INT. EVANSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

Inside, an uncooperative and unusually loud Xavier is being patted down by two officers, one of them is Jones. Detective Sims is nearby signing papers for a patrolman.

XAVIER

You guys are out of order.

Xavier is pushed towards a wall. He tries to jump back at the officer and gets slammed into the dry wall.

JONES

I wouldn't advise trying that again.

XAVIER

Get your hands off me!

I didn't kill anybody.

OFFICER

Kid, you're gonna to have to be more original. That's everybody's story.

XAVIER

This is ludicrous. What proof do you have? I...

Before Xavier finishes his sentence Jones extracts the medallion necklace from his letter jacket.

The officer interrupts Sims and dangles it in front of him.

SIMS

(clutching the necklace)

I really hoped I was somehow wrong about you. But the evidence keeps piling up.

The officers continue to search the teen.

XAVIER

That doesn't belong to me. I don't know how it got in my pocket. I swear.

JONES

Well, what about this?

(he grips the note Xavier received earlier)

Who were you planning to send it to?

Xavier lashes out.

XAVIER

That's what I was calling Sims about when you idiots arrested me. Someone--

SIMS

--Don't. I'm not taking any chances. You might want an attorney present.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Xavier is taken down the hall and shoved into a chair to use the phone. A janitor rolls his bucket into the same corridor and pretends to mop the clean floor. Xavier dials the phone.

XAVIER

Sorry to wake you, Dad.

INT. DAD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dad turns on the lamp on night stand and sits up in bed. The scene toggles back-and-forth between father and son.

DAD

It's all right. What's up? You okay.

XAVIER

I'm about to be put in lock-up for killing Markus and Chris.

Dad is silent.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - BOOKING (MONTAGE)

XAVIER

I didn't do it. I measured wall, getting his mug shots taken.

DAD (O.S.)

I know. You just caught me off guard. You are just joking, right?

XAVIER

No. It's all a mess. They really think I killed people--

Dad throws back the covers and hops out of bed.

DAD

--Let me call my attorney and I'll be on my way down.

XAVIER

(trying to be strong) There's nothing you can do tonight.

DAD

I can't leave you in there. It's wrong.

XAVIER

They won't let me set bail until morning. I just need you to prepare Mom. Okay?

Jones taps him on the shoulder.

DAD

Xavier--

XAVIER

--I have to go--

DAD

(desperate) --Son, wait--

XAVIER

It's just one night. They got nothing solid on me. The air is solid on me. A sweaty Kyle prepares to jog away from the athletic center. Hope nearly Xavier hangs up before Alex can say another word. The janitor walks off when Jones escorts Xavier to the booking area

HOPE

I'm so sorry. Please forgive me.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - BOOKING (MONTAGE)

Xavier rotates in front of a measured wall, getting his mug shots taken.

INT. HOPE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A worried Hope checks her answering machine messages. The screen flashes zero as Jules turns over in her sleep in the bed next to the night stand. Hope glances at a wallet-sized photo of Xavier before climbing into bed.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - BOOKING

Officers place Xavier's fingers in ink to take his prints.

INT. XAVIER'S HOUSE IN CHICAGO - LIVING ROOM

Xavier's mother turns on the living room light in her nightgown. She walks over to the front door and opens it. Alex/Dad stands on the porch.

He mouths a few words and she sinks into his arms. Jonathan rushes in from another room to see what's wrong.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - LOCK-UP

Jones walks Xavier past other people locked behind bars.

INT. DARK ROOM - NIGHT

A leather-clad hand cleans a gun on a foot locker. Pictures of the baseball victims lay strewn around him. A list of baseball players is on the floor. The hand starts to cross off the names of those killed.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - JAIL CELL

Jones closes the door behind Xavier when he enters the cell. Xavier turns around and clutches the bars as Jones leaves.

EXT. ATHLETIC CENTER - DAY

The air is filled with birds chirping. A sweaty Kyle prepares to jog away from the athletic center. Hope nearly runs over him with a car. She comes to a screeching halt. Hope rolls down her window.

HOPE

I'm so sorry. Please forgive me.

KYLE

Dude, you need to watch where you're going or stay from behind the wheel.

HOPE

I didn't get much sleep last night.
I kept thinking about the letter
Xavier received.

KYLE

You still on that? Dude, let it go.

HOPE

(ignoring Kyle's comment)
Maybe we should see if any stores stock
the paper it was written on. Did Xavier
call Detective Sims about it?

KYLE

You should know. He spent the night with you.

HOPE

(offended)
No he didn't. What are you trying to
insinuate?

KYLE

When he didn't come home, I thought...

Hope starts to panic. Passersby peek into the car.

HOPE

This isn't happening. Where could he
be?... You think whoever sent the note--

KYLE

Wait a minute. Let's not jump to
conclusions.

Behind them, Justin exits the athletic center and goes over
to see what's wrong.

HOPE

But what if--

JUSTIN

Is everything all right?

Kyle is too busy with Hope to answer.

KYLE

Calm down, dude. He probably stayed out popping a few balls and crashed in the team lounge.

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL CELL - DAY

In a dungeon-like setting, Xavier pokes at the food on his jail tray.

JUSTIN (O.S.)

Who? Xavier?

HOPE (O.S.)

But we don't know that for sure. He could be in trouble. Maybe we should notify the cops.

Xavier slides the food across the floor and lies on his cot.

KYLE (O.S.)

Dude, you're jumping the gun here.

JUSTIN

He's already there.

CUT TO:

EXT. ATHLETIC CENTER - DAY

Hope is holding her cell phone ready to dial.

HOPE

Where?

JUSTIN

The police station.

KYLE

What?

JUSTIN

Coach told the team this morning that he was arrested for the shootings.

Kyle hops in the car with Hope, leaving Justin standing alone.

Justin swings his book bag over his shoulder as they peel out of the parking lot. Another BASEBALL PLAYER walks up behind Justin.

BASEBALL PLAYER

Better hurry or you'll miss the final.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

The teacher passes out test booklets to a sea of students gathered in a lecture room with stadium seating. Gary, Jules, Doug, Kenny and other baseball players are present. Cassandra walks in from the back with a few other STUDENTS and glances around the room.

TEACHER

We have just a few more minutes before we get started. In the meantime I want to make it perfectly clear what I'm looking for in this essay. Remember Lawrence's first novel, The White Peacock, explores not only social conventions but illuminates man's alienation from so-called normal society. I'm sure that if Lawrence had not died at the young age of 45...

The teacher's voice fades in the student's chatter.

INT. BACK OF CLASSROOM

Richard opens the lecture room door quietly and grabs Cassandra from behind, pressing his body against hers as she scans the room for a seat.

She jumps and quickly flings his arms from around her. Jules takes a mental note.

CASSANDRA

Hey...

RICHARD

That was totally insensitive of me. I just saw you standing there and--

CASSANDRA

--You thought you could treat me however you wanted to.

RICHARD
Come on. You know I'm not like those guys.

Cassandra struts off and finds an empty seat. Richard plops down next to her in the middle of a row. A worried-looking Cassandra digs through her book bag for a pen.

INT. FRONT OF THE CLASSROOM

The teacher continues to work the room.

TEACHER
It should take you about an hour and half to complete.

RICHARD
Here. I have an extra one. Relax. We went over the material. You know this stuff.

CASSANDRA
(still slightly annoyed)
I know. I just want this exam to be over.

RICHARD
You'll do great. And afterwards we'll have two things to celebrate.

CASSANDRA
What's the other?

RICHARD
We're almost in the clear.

Cassandra and Richard lock eyes. He nods.

The teacher makes her way back down to the front of the class. The lecture room door opens in the background.

RICHARD
I've just about taken care of everything. Soon we can put our worries behind, and move on.

He reaches into her lap and holds her hand. Cassandra exudes sheer joy and relief.

RICHARD
I told you I'd take care of you.

Richard smiles and leans over as if to kiss her when students nearby shuffle in their seats to let someone down their row.

Justin stops dead in his tracks when he gets to Richard and Cassandra.

Cassandra turns around and is surprised to see Justin.

DOUGLAS

Busted!

Richard slinks back in his seat. Justin's face turns red.

KENNY

(to Justin)

What'd you expect? It was only a matter of time before she found a real man.

RICHARD

Fellas, please don't.

DOUGLAS

Or maybe you guys can have a threesome. I think that might solve your problem.

The players slap hands and nudge each other in their own amusement. Justin grabs Douglas out of his seat by his jacket.

JUSTIN

One by one, you're all going down. I will mop the floor with you.

Cassandra lets out a shriek and the teammates try to break them up. The stout teacher struggles up the stairs. The entire room is in a hustle.

Gary, seated nearby the commotion, grabs papers on his desk to keep them from falling. Slightly hanging out a folder is a team roster with names of dead players crossed off.

TEACHER

Break it up!

DOUGLAS

(with a smug expression)

Oh yeah. I forgot, you like it rough.

As the teacher leads Justin, JUSTIN he stops he glances back at Douglas.
I'm about to show you how much.

The teacher is huffing and puffing up the stairs.

TEACHER
INT. EVAN I'm not playing. I'll throw both of you out of here. Baseball or no baseball.

Xavier paces in his cell. He hears footsteps in the corridor.

CASSANDRA
(to Justin)
A GUARD Please let him go before you get in trouble. Another gives him a quick hug and looks him over.

DOUGLAS
Awh. Look she's defending him. I guess you do still care. okay? Have they distracted in any way?

RICHARD
She's right, man. We can settle all this later. I'm okay.

Justin gives Richard a look that could kill. The teacher squeezes past students as she approaches.

TEACHER
I won't stand for this in my class. You can either let him go, or get a failing grade. What's it going to be?

Douglas smirks at Justin.

An angry Justin tightens his grip.

TEACHER
The attorney explains her. That's it. You'll have to take an F on the exam. I want you out of here.

Justin pushes his teammate back into his seat.

JUSTIN
What? My father will kill...I won't be able to play...you can't do this.

Douglas cackles.

TEACHER
Is that necessary? I just did. As for the rest of you. The exam begins now.

As the teacher leads Justin down the steps he glances back at Douglas.

JUSTIN

This is not over.

INT. EVANSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT - CELL - DAY

Xavier paces in his cell. Keys jangle. He hears footsteps in the corridor.

A GUARD opens the cell. In rush Xavier's mother, Alex and a FEMALE ATTORNEY. Xavier's mother gives him a quick hug and looks him over.

MOTHER

Oh my sweet baby. Are you okay? Have they mistreated you in any way?

XAVIER

Mom, I'm so glad to see you. I'm okay but I didn't hurt anyone.

ALEX

No need to convince us, son.

MOTHER

We know you could never take another man's life. Everything will get cleared up.

ALEX

This is my attorney, Vivian Lee.

The attorney extends her hand and shakes Xavier's.

ATTORNEY

Nice to meet you. Your father has filled me in somewhat. But I need a few more details from you before we meet with Sims. Shall we?

The guard starts to cuff Xavier.

MOTHER

Is that necessary?

GUARD

I'm afraid it is.

ATTORNEY

Don't worry. I'll have him take them off as soon as we get to the conference room.

INT. EVANSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT - FRONT DESK - DAY

Hope and Kyle are arguing with a UNIFORMED OFFICER.

KYLE

Dude, we just want to talk to him.

UNIFORMED OFFICER

Mr. Johnson is tied up. You'll have to wait.

HOPE

For how long? We've already been here for two hours.

Alex and Xavier's mother pass behind them. Ascending a staircase off to the side, Xavier is escorted by four guards.

GUARD

The conference room is down this way.

Hope turns her back to the uniformed officer in disgust and sees Xavier. She hits Kyle on the arm and bounds toward Xavier.

HOPE

Xavier!

She tries to reach for a shell-shocked Xavier. The guards keep her at bay.

XAVIER

How'd you...

(beat)

I never wanted you to see me like this.

KYLE

Dude, you hanging in?

Xavier nods. Hope tries to get closer.

GUARD

Miss, you're going to have to back away.

HOPE
I just--

KYLE
INT. EVANSTON Give 'em break, will you?

GUARD
With a box under his arm, Jonathan enters to find
Xavier and I'm sorry. I can't.

In the background Chauncey discretely enters the station and slips by them. Xavier's attorney walks up.

XAVIER
Just do what he says. Please.

ATTORNEY
Hope, is it? I'm sure you'll get to see Xavier very soon if I have anything to say about it. But right now we need to get going.

Hope reluctantly moves out of the way.

HOPE
I'm here for you.

The guards pull Xavier down the hall. He looks back over his shoulder at Hope.

INT. EVANSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT - SIMS' OFFICE - DAY

Sims leaves his office with Jonathan in tow.

SIMS
I know this is difficult, but the best way to help your son is by getting him to tell the truth.

Jonathan angrily grabs him by the shoulder.

JONATHAN
You're making a mistake.

Sims looks at Jonathan's hand. He lets go of his shoulder.

JONATHAN
He's told you everything he knows. Xavier has no reason to lie.

SIMS

You should know more than anyone, my friend, that sometimes people aren't who we believe them to be.

INT. EVANSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

With a box under his arm, Sims and Jonathan enter to find Xavier and company waiting. Xavier's lawyer pounces.

ATTORNEY

Enough is enough, Detective Sims. On what grounds has my client been charged?

Sims dumps a silencer, bullets and Raiders paraphernalia out of the box onto the desk.

ATTORNEY

And what does this prove?

SIMS

We found it in Xavier's baseball locker.

ALEX

Impossible.

XAVIER

None of that's mine.

Jonathan squeezes Xavier's mother's shoulder. She shakes her head in disagreement with Sims as well.

SIMS

The customized .25 caliber bullets are the same from both shootings. The medallion is the old Raiders symbol which we confiscated from Xavier when we brought 'em in. His prints are on everything.

JONATHAN

Xavier, how can this be true?

XAVIER

I'm being set up. Someone must have planted that stuff in my locker.

ATTORNEY

My client has no motive. One of the deceased was his best friend. More importantly, Xavier wasn't playing the game or had a gun. There were two sets of casings at the first shooting, and my client was coming home when the second shooting happened. Clearly you can see something isn't right here.

SIMS

What isn't right is how your client used Nathan's gang related death to try and cover his tracks.

ATTORNEY

You're really reaching, detective--

SIMS

We have a witness who'll testify to Xavier's gang affiliation. Xavier gave him self away at the funeral talking with Chauncey Williams.

ATTORNEY

Is that your witness?

SIMS

No. Chauncey's one of the gang leaders. And his description matches the person running away from the dorms after Markus' shooting.

XAVIER

He's a Raider?

ATTORNEY

I need a moment alone with my client.

Everyone starts to move except Sims who ignores the attorney and rips into Xavier.

SIMS

How could you kill your best friend...

XAVIER

I didn't.

ATTORNEY

Xavier be quiet. Sims, I said I need a--

SIMS

I can understand the motives in the other case. Chris's brother used to be in the gang. Now I wonder if you did Nathan too.

MOTHER

Shut your mouth! He didn't do anything.

SIMS

Are you just popping anyone with a connection to the Raiders?

Xavier looks like his head is swimming.

ALEX

That's enough, detective--

SIMS

Myles was murdered around this time last year.

XAVIER

(jumping out of his seat)

You son-of-a-bi.... my son?

Xavier's mother and Jonathan grab hold of him.

ATTORNEY

Detective--

SIMS

-- Is this how you work through your anger?

ATTORNEY

I'm not going to ask you again--

JONATHAN

Ease up, Sims.

SIMS

You probably didn't think we'd make the connection. Huh?

MOTHER

For Christ sake!--

ATTORNEY

That's it. I'll have your badge.

She storms to the door and pokes her head out.

A scanner blares.

ATTORNEY

I need the captain in here. Right now!

Shots fired.

SIMS

But ever since the department's been working with Chicago to hone in on who shot Myles, we've all been alert to every move the Raiders make.

Kyle and Hope jump from the table to full attention.

XAVIER

What?!

A janitor mopping the floor watches them closely. Chauncey taps him on the shoulder.

ATTORNEY

I said that's enough!

The attorney and Sims follow the captain out into the hall.

Xavier's mother gasps. Jonathan grabs her hand.

The CAPTAIN appears in the door frame overhearing the last comments.

MOTHER

You know who killed my son?

We have the gun. A Douglas Ramsey.

We're gonna see him.

CAPTAIN

Hope holds a scream.

What the hell is going on in here? Are you trying to jeopardize this case?

Sims doesn't take his eyes off Xavier. Alex hands Xavier's mother a cup of water from a nearby cooler.

ATTORNEY

I will not stand for the constant harassment and scare tactics.

CAPTAIN

I'm talking to you.

Sims, who is clearly frazzled, slowly turns towards the captain.

I want my client released. No

Seconds later, commotion erupts outside the room. The conference room door is wide open.

Jones and other officers are scrambling around outside the room.

He could have a partner.

The captain rushes out.

INT. EVANSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

A scanner blares.

POLICE SCANNER

Shots fired.

(beat)

I'm on the east lawn of the Registrar's
Office at Northwestern University.
Request immediate assistance.

Kyle and Hope jump from their seats to full attention.

A janitor mopping the floor watches them closely. Chauncey
taps him on the shoulder and they walk off.

The attorney and Sims follow the captain out into the hall.
Rapid fire erupts from the scanner.

ATTORNEY

Captain, we're not finished.

POLICE SCANNER

Someone's returning fire...

We have one down. A Douglas Ramsey.

We're gonna need an ambulance.

Hope holds her hands to her mouth. She lets out a screech.

HOPE

It's another baseball player.

CAPTAIN

Jones, get your ass down there and
see what's going on.

JONES

Yes sir.

ATTORNEY

(to the captain)

I want my client released. An
alleged killer can't be in two
at places once.

SIMS

He could have a partner.

ATTORNEY

I will sue this entire precinct
for wrongful arrest if--

CAPTAIN

If the boy can post bail he's free to go.

Xavier's family spill out of the conference room. Xavier is behind them.

JONATHAN

Whatever it is I'll pay it.
Just let him loose.

SIMS

It's \$150,000.

ALEX AND XAVIER

You've got to be kidding me.

MOTHER

We can't afford that!

JONATHAN

I'll re-finance my house.

MOTHER

But you're almost finished paying
it off.

JONATHAN

It doesn't matter. This is more important.

Xavier is shocked but says nothing. He and Jonathan make eye contact.

ATTORNEY

(to captain)

They shouldn't have to do this. The
bail is excessively high for a kid
with no priors.

CAPTAIN

These are serious crimes.

ALEX

(to the attorney)

Is there any way to get it lowered?

ATTORNEY

I'm almost certain. We'll have to see the judge. The sooner the better.

The attorney ushers the group down the hall.

EXT. ALLEY OUTSIDE POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Chauncey exits the back door, pushing the janitor out.

CHAUNCEY

You were supposed to have taken care of him by now.

JANITOR

I couldn't get to him last night. The guards kept a close watch.

In anger Chauncey kicks a cat walking down the alley.

CHAUNCEY

Well, hopefully this shooting will tie up the police and buy us some more time. Look at the lengths I have to go to.

JANITOR

My fault, dog.

CHAUNCEY

We need to get to Xavier before he starts talking. Otherwise we're all gonna be in trouble.

JANITOR

And if we don't?

CHAUNCEY

(touching the gun in his pants)
Things are going to get a bit messy again.

EXT. REGISTRAR OFFICE - LAWN - DAY

Yellow police tape stretches from two trees in front of the administration building. Officers comb the area for clues.

News crews conduct live broadcasts. Tense Students and other gazers swarm the area.

EXT. TWO LANE STREET - DAY

Hope rushes towards the crime scene and spots her roommate Jules. The ambulance sirens blare as the vehicle pulls off.

Students scatter from the scene clutching each other for dear life, while constantly checking their surroundings. Everyone is on edge. Jules falls into Hopes arms crying.

JULES

Oh my God, Hope. When is it going to end?

Hope holds Jules' face and wipes away her tears.

HOPE

Soon I hope. Do they know if Doug will make it?

JULES

I don't know. Are the police going to let Xavier go now that this has happened?

HOPE

As we speak.

Jules shivers.

HOPE

Are you going to be all right?

JULES

It's not easy watching someone hold on by a thread. I need to clear my head. See you back at the dorm.

Jules makes her way through the crowd. Hope steps inquisitively towards the police tape.

She cringes at the sight of the blood-stained grass. Hope moves back a step, bumping into a student.

HOPE

Excuse me.

She turns to walk away but stiffens when girls pass by her.

CASSANDRA

That rapist bastard got off easy compared to the others.

Hope stands with her mouth open. She watches as Richard catches up to Cassandra, whisking her away from her friends.

Hope looks around frantically. Kyle advances and hands Hope car keys.

KYLE

Dude, if your mouth was open any wider you could catch flies.

HOPE

Cassandra knows something.

KYLE

Come again?

HOPE

About the shootings. I heard Cassandra tell her friends that Douglas was a predator, which is why he got hit like his teammates.

Kyle's jaw slowly drops.

HOPE

Do you know what she's talking about?

KYLE

This can't be true. No way, dude.

HOPE

What?

Kyle breaks into a cold sweat. He paces and glances up toward the sky periodically.

KYLE

Shit!

(stuttering)

Dude, I thought my eyes were playing tricks on me.

HOPE

What the hell are you stammering about?

KYLE

I was drunk. The room was dark and--

HOPE

--Did the Panthers rape somebody?
Is that why they're the only people
being targeted?

Kyle stops in his tracks.

HOPE

Is that it? Is that what's been going
on? Is someone getting vengeance?
Who was raped?

KYLE

Hope. Dude. I--

Hope angrily grabs Kyle by the sleeve and drags him under a
tree for privacy. She is turning red.

HOPE

Come on Kyle, fess-up. What...
How do you know about this? People
are dying. And someone's trying to
pin it on Xavier.

KYLE

Dude, I didn't think it was any of
my business.

HOPE

Enough already!

KYLE

Okay! Okay!
(beat)
Just give me second, will you?

He tries to gain some composure.

KYLE

The night of Richard's party...

INT. BEDROOM - FLASHBACK

Head pounding music fills the room. Silhouettes of male
figures surround a bed hooting and hollering.

One of the masculine figures is hunched over thrusting his
body on an unseen person.

A female voice cries out.

Justin taps the note on FEMALE VOICE
No...no. Please stop.

Male voices cackle.

Justin rifles through the items and extracts a few punctured
Panther baseball cards. MALE VOICE

Is that how you like it?

INT. FRAT HOUSE - PRESENT DAY

Justin hops up the stairs. He knocks on Richard's door.

JUSTIN

Hey man, I need to talk to you.

He waits, but there is no answer.

INT. RICHARD'S ROOM - DAY

Justin pushes the squeaky door open.

JUSTIN

Man, I don't have all day.

Richard is not there. Justin flicks the light on and closes
the door behind him.

He moves toward the dresser viewing pictures of himself with
Richard and Cassandra. Justin rubs his finger across
Cassandra's image.

Justin picks up a stack of photos from the Blakely benefit
and flips through them. He pauses at a picture of Richard
and Cassandra in an intimate embrace. In the next they share
a kiss.

Anger washes over Justin's face. He slaps the pictures on
the dresser disturbing a note.

It reads: I let my foolish snobbery stop you from dating
Cassandra once before and it turns out I judged you
unfairly. If you really love my daughter I will not stand in
the way. S. Blakely.

Justin moves Richard's team jacket from a chair and plops
down.

JUSTIN

Guess there's no turning back now.

INT. CAMPUS BOOK STORE - NIGHT

Justin taps the note on his knee. He lifts his head and notices a box under the bed. He pulls it out and takes a seat on the wooden floor.

Justin rifles through the items and extracts a few punctured Panther baseball cards.

Nathan's card has a hole in his head and Chris' is ripped.

Xavier's card has the words: "Prick" written across it. He fingers a couple of newspaper clippings of the campus shootings. "I wonder who's next" is scribbled across the bottom of one article.

Justin stops, seemingly thinking for a moment.

He carefully puts everything back where he found it and leaves.

INT. FRAT HALLWAY - DAY

Justin pauses briefly in front of the room he chased Cassandra out of the night of the party, before moving on.

JUSTIN

I have to make her understand.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Choppy waves from Lake Michigan crash against each other and wash onto shore. STUDENTS run playfully on the sand.

Cassandra and Richard cuddle on the beach. He gently rocks her like a baby as the sun begins to set.

RICHARD

Know that everything I do is for you.
I don't care who has to suffer. I
won't lose you.

Sticking out of his back pocket are a pair of leather gloves.

The butt of a gun is visibly tucked in the back of his shorts as Richard rocks Cassandra.

INT. CAMPUS BOOK STORE - NIGHT

Fresh out of jail, Xavier slams down a pay phone receiver outside the book store.

XAVIER

(to himself)

Where the hell are you, Chauncey?

He storms into the store. The store manager tries to stop him.

STORE MANAGER

We don't want any trouble in here!

Xavier brushes him off and heads straight for his coworker at the back of the store.

XAVIER

What's your connection to the Raiders,
and why are you helping them set me up?

COWORKER

Man, I don't know what you're talking
about.

Xavier gets in his coworker's face, backing him into a corner. The store manager seems unsure of what to do.

XAVIER

Boy, I'm not playing with you.
Don't make me have to ask you again.

The coworker rams into Xavier, attempting to get past. Xavier maintains his balance and shoves the coworker into a stand, splattering chips and snacks all over the floor.

STORE MANAGER

(heading for the phone)

I'm calling security!

XAVIER

Do what you will, but I'm not leaving
until he starts talking.

Xavier reaches down and lifts his coworker up by his shirt. The coworker breathes heavily.

XAVIER

Well?

COWORKER

Back off me and I'll tell you everything.

Xavier gives him a sharp blow to the stomach. The coworker grunts, doubles over and Xavier lifts him back up.

STORE MANAGER

Security will be here in a minute.

XAVIER

Start talking.

COWORKER

(coughing)

I was giving 'em information on you to help clear part of my drug debts.

XAVIER

(to his coworker)

That's where the money from my register was going. What was the info for?

COWORKER

Something about a shooting a year ago.

EXT. EVANSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

Sims walks Justin out the main entrance and shakes his hands.

SIMS

Thanks. We'll check into it. If you're correct, this nightmare will be over.

Sims watches Justin walk away and get into his car. Jones walks to Sims as he stares out the glass doors.

SIMS

Did you send a squad car to pick up Cassandra Blakely?

JONES

It left not too long ago.

SIMS

Good. And check out this Justin fella. I've had one too many students come in here today. First Xavier's girlfriend. And they have conflicting stories.

JONES

I'll have someone get on it while I
secure the search warrant for the frat.

Sims spots a car up the street. He squints his eyes, trying
to see who's inside.

SIMS

What is that guy waiting on?
Everything is closed up around here.
(turning to walk away)
If he's still there in ten minutes send
someone out to see what the deal is.

INT. SPORTS UTILITY VEHICLE

Chauncey tightly grips the steering wheel of his running
vehicle parked up the street from the police station. The
janitor approaches the car.

JANITOR

Our boy from the bookstore just called.

CHAUNCEY

What did he want?

JANITOR

Looks like Xavier shook him down and
is headed this way for the police.

CHAUNCEY

Well I'll be waiting for him.

EXT. DOWNTOWN EVANSTON STREET - NIGHT

Xavier peddles furiously on his bike towards the police
station in the distance.

Chauncey, who is circling the block, spies Xavier. He
screeches toward Xavier, shooting out of the window of his
car.

XAVIER

What the hell?

Xavier's arm gets hit by a bullet.

CHAUNCEY

Time to end this once and for all.

Chauncey loads another clip as Xavier peddles off toward campus.

Chauncey's sports utility vehicle flies down the dark streets weaving in and out of traffic as Xavier frantically tries to get away.

Several PEDESTRIANS and MOTORISTS scramble to get out of the way.

Almost catching up to Xavier, Chauncey sideswipes another vehicle before hitting a light pole. Xavier keeps riding and ducks between two buildings.

Smoke rises from the hood of Chauncey's car. He stumbles out, bruised, but runs with a limp after Xavier, clutching his gun.

A nearby PEDESTRIAN phones the police.

PEDESTRIAN

This punk just totally wrecked my car.

EXT. EVANSTON PARK - NIGHT

Xavier slows to catch his breath realizing he lost Chauncey.

He checks his arm and peddles toward a water fountain by an idle swing set. He takes a quick sip of water while checking his surroundings.

Before Xavier can lift his head SOMEONE slaps him on the back. Xavier nearly jumps out of his skin yelling.

A single swing rocks back and forth on the playground as a figure quickly walks by.

SOMEONE

Sorry man. Didn't mean to scare you.
I thought you were somebody else.

Xavier tries to gather his composure.

XAVIER

(to himself)
Get it together, kid.

As he leans over the fountain splashing water on his face Chauncey knocks him into the gravel. The two battle for dear life.

XAVIER

Man, what's your problem?

CHAUNCEY

You know too much.

Chauncey punches Xavier in the face and gives him a few body jabs before pulling out his gun.

CHAUNCEY

You'll never be able to finger the Raiders for Myles' death.

XAVIER

What does that have to do with the campus shootings?

CHAUNCEY

That's the least of your worries.

Xavier lunges at Chauncey, hitting him in the stomach.

He repeatedly smacks Chauncey's hand against the swing set knocking Chauncey's gun out of his hand.

Xavier grabs Chauncey by the collar.

XAVIER

Man, why are you sweating me. I haven't done anything to you and you've had people reporting my every move?

Chauncey spits in Xavier's face and knees him in the groin. Xavier buckles over.

CHAUNCEY

You think we were going to let you trick off on some old stuff?

Xavier charges toward Chauncey, slamming him to the pavement. He repeatedly kicks Chauncey.

XAVIER

All your work was nothing, because I didn't get a look at who popped Myles. If I had, I would've told the cops.

Realizing what he's doing, Xavier stops kicking a bloody Chauncey. Chauncey lies in a fetal position coughing.

XAVIER

Under the So you killed my teammates trying to get to me?

Chauncey doesn't respond.

XAVIER

You hear me?

Xavier gives Chauncey another swift kick.

CHAUNCEY

Aw right, man. Chill.

XAVIER

Well, did you?

CHAUNCEY

(spitting out blood)

I wasn't trying to pop anyone but you the day Markus got hit. But if you're looking for someone to blame, why don't you start with your boy Richard.

XAVIER

What are you trying to feed me now?

CHAUNCEY

All I'm saying is that I wasn't the only one on campus running around with a loaded gun. He had it at the funeral.

In anger, Xavier knocks him out cold. Police cars pull up suddenly.

Sims jumps out. Xavier scrambles for his bike.

SIMS

Where you going, son?

XAVIER

I was just defending myself. He knows something about my brother's death.

Xavier hops on his bike and takes off toward campus.

SIMS

Xavier! ... you think it was Richard?

EXT. NORTHWESTERN CAMPUS - NIGHT ... his back to the street.

Under the school archway, Xavier bumps into Kyle, Hope and Jules.

KYLE

You look like you've been in a cat fight.

EXT. RICHARD'S FRAT HOUSE JULES

Yeah, your arm is bleeding.

Justin ... the house and shops ... by a ...
is a ... like ... as ... from the house ...
windows.

HOPE

(reaching for Xavier's arm)

You okay?

Police cars are parked out front. Students stand around
outside gawking as James ... officers enter and exit
the house.

XAVIER

I'm fine. I was just taking care
of some business.

Richard and Cassandra push through the crowd. Xavier and
friends aren't the far ...

KYLE

What, dude, mob business?

XAVIER

I'll explain later. Any of you seen
Richard around?

Stay back, I got this.

KYLE

Xavier ... Funny you should mention him. ... and shows him.

XAVIER

So you know? ... to kill Markus?

He wasn't even in the room.

HOPE

Richard ... falling over and spinning around.

Know what?

JULES

Who's behind the killings.

He pushes Xavier out of his way and proceeds up the frat
house steps. ... grabs Richard in the back making him
stumble. Richard gets up and takes a swing at Xavier.

XAVIER

Richard.

KYLE

Xavier ... Naw, dude. Cassandra. ... the side. Cassandra aides
Richard.

Naw, dude. Cassandra.

XAVIER

Excuse me?

CASSANDRA
Are you crazy?

JULES

What makes you think it was Richard?

A cop car drives by. Xavier turns his back to the street.

HOPE

Murmuring What's wrong?

XAVIER

Let's walk and talk. Talking about?

EXT. RICHARD'S FRAT HOUSE - NIGHT Jones exits the frat house.

Justin swaggers towards the house and stops cold by a tree in a trance-like state as music blares from the house's windows.

Police cars are parked out front. Students stand around outside gawking as Jones and other officers enter and exit the house carrying bagged items.

Richard and Cassandra push through the crowd. Xavier and friends aren't too far behind.

HOPE

Xavier, please re-think this.

XAVIER (to officer)

Stay back, I got this.

Xavier rushes up to Richard from behind and shoves him.

XAVIER (Xavier started it.)

Why'd you have to kill Markus?

He wasn't even in the room.

Richard keeps from falling over and spins around.

RICHARD

Boy, you better raise up. 't kill anyone.

He pushes Xavier out of his way and proceeds up the frat house steps. Xavier grabs Richard in the back making him stumble. Richard gets up and takes a swing at Xavier.

Xavier ducks and hits Richard in the side. Cassandra aides Richard.

CASSANDRA

Are you crazy?

XAVIER

Are you? Letting people go around
killing folks because you got raped.
Markus had nothing to do with it!

Murmuring fills the crowd.

RICHARD

What the hell are you talking about?

Xavier and Richard tussle as Officer Jones exits the frat house.

JONES

Settle down now...Stop.. I said stop!
(beat)

Richard you don't need to do anything
else to get yourself in trouble. But
thanks for coming home. We've been
looking for you.

RICHARD

Is that right? What for?

JONES

Boy, you better watch your tone.

(motioning to another officer)

Cuff 'em.

CASSANDRA

(getting hysterical)

He didn't do anything. Xavier started it.

JONES

Her too. Both of you are under arrest for
the campus shootings.

CASSANDRA

You can't do this. I didn't kill anyone.

RICHARD

(struggling with the officer)

You've got it all wrong.

XAVIER

Is that right!

JONES

Son, thanks, but I don't need any help.

(to Richard)

You should've come to us instead of
avenging her honor.

RICHARD

(to Cassandra)

What's he talking about?

Did someone hurt you?

CASSANDRA

Officer, please listen to me.

Officers pat a struggling Richard down. They find his gun.

JONES

This will go nicely with the mangled
photos we found of your teammates in
your room.

(to officers)

Read 'em their rights.

Richard and Cassandra are escorted to the police car. Xavier
and Kyle stroll alongside as Hope and Jules unsuccessfully
try to hold them back.

Xavier accidentally bumps into Gary. The roster of baseball
players with crossed off names falls from Gary's pocket in
front of Jones's foot.

XAVIER

Ohhh. I didn't see you.

JONES

(picking up the paper)

What is this?

RICHARD

It fell out of his pocket.

GARY

No it didn't.

XAVIER

(looking over Jones's shoulder)

That's everybody who's dead so far.

In the background, Justin pulls the hood on his sweat shirt on his head concealing his face. He gets closer to the crowd to watch.

Richard continues to struggle with the officers.

RICHARD
I told you we didn't do it.

XAVIER
Evidence proves otherwise.

JONES
(to Gary)
But why are you carrying this around?

GARY
I...I...

RICHARD
--That squirt has hated members of the team ever since he couldn't make the cut--

GARY
--What's your point!--

RICHARD
--You probably killed 'em for always picking on you--

GARY
--If that was the case you'd have been the first.

Richard, still being held by officers, tries to lunge for Gary.

JONES
That's enough!
(beat)
(to Gary, holding the list)
Is this yours?

Gary is slow to speak.

GARY
Yes. But I was only trying to see if there was a pattern to the killings.

RICHARD
Whatever!

JONES

I've heard enough. Put 'em all in the car and read 'em their rights. If Douglas gains consciousness maybe he can name the shooter.

The officers grab Gary, moving him, Richard and Cassandra towards the squad car. Xavier and friends aren't far behind.

XAVIER

(to Jones)

But Richard had a weapon?

RICHARD

It was for protection. And the photos--

CASSANDRA

(to Richard)

--This can't be happening. Not after everything we've done to erase the past and be together.

JONES

The more you say, the more we can use against you.

Jones puts them in the squad car. The windows are rolled down. Xavier and Kyle are still close behind, listening.

RICHARD

I know this doesn't look good, but you've got to believe me. I worked so hard to get your father's approval, why would I lie to you now?

XAVIER

-- Whatever. I hope they lock you up and throw away the keys.

CASSANDRA

You think you know everything, don't you?

Xavier leans in the police car window as Jones heads for the driver's side.

XAVIER

I don't know what the deal is with Gary. But I know Justin, that rapist boyfriend of yours should have died instead of Markus.

(MORE)

XAVIER (CONT'D)

Where is he, anyway, he's normally always hanging around here.

A confused Richard turns to Cassandra for answers as the squad car pulls off.

RICHARD

Cassandra. I knew he cheated on you, but a rapist?

Kyle and Xavier look around the crowd for Justin. Xavier spots him. The two lock eyes.

Xavier walks toward him. Justin steps backwards.

XAVIER

Oh, he's going down too.

Xavier breaks into a sprint as the cop car pulls off.

Justin makes a quick turn and bolts around a corner. Xavier chases Justin back onto campus.

EXT. CAMPUS QUAD - NIGHT

Justin, looking over his shoulder, bumps into Kenny, who's holding a beer bottle. He's tipsy.

KENNY

Look who we have here.
The famous switch hitter.

JUSTIN

Not now, Kenny.

KENNY

You're the one who came slamming into me.

Justin spots Xavier not too far off and prepares to jet when Kenny forcefully smacks Justin on the butt.

KENNY

Hoping to knock one out the park tonight?

Justin sucker punches Kenny. He falls to the ground. Justin stares coldly down at him, Kenny chuckles sadistically.

KENNY

So now you want to be a man.

Justin whips out a gun and aims it at his drunken comrade. Xavier rushes near them.

XAVIER

Drop it, man. Or you'll be facing more than rape charges.

Justin ignores him. In the background frightened students scream and take cover.

JUSTIN

(to Kenny)

It's time you met your maker like the rest.

KENNY

You don't have the balls. Never did.

XAVIER

(yelling to Justin)

Come on, man. Don't do this.

JUSTIN

Mind your business freshie, or you're next.

XAVIER

I did that the night of the party and look what it got me-- arrested and my best friend's dead. And for what? You're the one who helped rape your girlfriend.

Justin pulls a silencer out of his pocket and screws it onto his gun. He takes a shot at the ground next to Kenny's head. Then aims it Xavier. Xavier shrinks back.

Kenny starts to sober up. Justin stands over Kenny placing his foot on Kenny's chest.

JUSTIN

How does it feel to be powerless? Are you scared?

XAVIER

Don't be stupid, let him go.

KENNY

Come on man. ...please... don't.

Tears collect in Kenny's eyes.

XAVIER

Justin, let's talk about this. No one has to get hurt. We're all teammates here. Just hand me the gun and --

JUSTIN

(pointing gun at Xavier)
-- Shut the hell up!

Xavier backs off. Justin returns his attention to Kenny, who's crying.

JUSTIN

Now tell me. How would you feel if I ripped your clothes off and shoved this gun up your ass?

XAVIER

Man, you're sick.

Justin hits Kenny in the head with the butt of his gun. He unbuckles Kenny's pants. Kenny grabs at Justin's hands.

KENNY

(begging)
We were all just kidding around.
It got out of hand. I'm sorry.

Xavier rushes toward Justin. He calmly turns toward Xavier and pulls the trigger. The bullet barely misses his head.

Xavier cries out in fear.

KENNY

Jesus!

JUSTIN

Don't worry, you'll see him soon.
Or then again, maybe not.

XAVIER

Why are you doing this? bastards!

Justin cocks his gun to shoot Kenny.

KENNY

Justin...man...please...don't.

JUSTIN

Shhhhhh.....

(beat)

I'm only going to give you what you dished out. It's only fair.

Justin yanks Kenny's pants down. Justin rolls Kenny over on his stomach with his foot. Justin taps him on the butt.

JUSTIN

(to Xavier)

You want to know why I'm doing this?

XAVIER

Lets talk. Just let him go.

KENNY

(screaming)

Help! Help! Somebody help me!

(beat)

Oh God no. Please man, have mercy.

INT. FRAT HOUSE BEDROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Head pounding music fills the room.

JUSTIN (V.O.)

That's funny. I remember asking you the same thing when you guys found out about me and Markus.

Nathan, Chris, Douglas and Kenny are in Justin's face, while also holding back a crying Cassandra.

The baseball players push Justin down on the bed. Nathan, Chris and Kenny wrestle with Justin to keep him still while Douglas struggles with Cassandra.

JUSTIN

Get off me. What I do is nobody else's business.

CASSANDRA

Let go of him, you sick bastards!

Kenny hits Justin in the crotch, waving Nathan out of the way for his
 (tipsy)
 He's the switch hitter.

Next batter, bat
 JUSTIN
 Shut up. Leave her alone.

Kenny unzips his pants and violently rapes Justin.
 NATHAN
 It's time to show your little girlfriend...

Nathan walks over to Douglas and Cassandra and caresses the outside of her thigh. Douglas goes to the bed to help hold Justin down.

NATHAN
 (continuing)
 ...what she's been missing.

As Kenny...
 JUSTIN
 Let her go!

The startled players loose
 KENNY
 When we're good and ready.

Cassandra's shirt gets ripped
 CHRIS
 Batter up!

Nathan yanks Cassandra over towards the bed.

Chris and Kenny pull down Justin's pants. He struggles.

Douglas shoves a bottle into Justin's buttock.

Justin and Cassandra scream simultaneously.

The music blasting from downstairs muffles their voices.

DOUGLAS
 I thought you liked it like that.

The baseball players cackle and use other objects to sodomize Justin. They hoot and holler. Cassandra is hysterical and Justin struggles to get loose.

Justin screams in pain.

Justin glances up in anguish at Cassandra's face before biting Kenny's arm that's holding him down.

Kenny hits Justin in the face before waving Nathan out of the way for his turn.

CHRIS

Next batter, batter...

Kenny unzips his pants and physically rapes Justin.

CASSANDRA

No...no. Please stop.

The baseball players laugh.

KENNY

Is that how you like it? Does Markus give it to you like this?

As Kenny thrusts himself in Justin, the bedroom door opens.

A silhouette of an unseen Kyle stumbles in the room and leaves in a hurry.

The startled players loosen their grip on Cassandra, allowing her to break free.

Cassandra's shirt gets ripped as Douglas tries to keep her from fleeing the room.

JUSTIN

Cassandra!

EXT. CAMPUS QUAD - NIGHT - PRESENT DAY

Justin has his gun aimed at Kenny while digging his foot into the side of Kenny's head. Kenny cries.

An enraged Xavier moves closer.

XAVIER

That's a lie.

JUSTIN

Think I'd make up something like that?

XAVIER

Kyle saw you guys run a train on Cassie.

JUSTIN

Well, your boy was wrong.

XAVIER

Regardless, why drag Markus into this?

JUSTIN

Markus and I were seeing each other for months.

XAVIER

Liar!

Xavier charges toward Justin. He stops in his tracks, sweat dripping from his face, as Justin points the gun at him and places one foot on Kenny's back.

JUSTIN

I don't care what you believe.

XAVIER

I'd have known. I grew up with him.

JUSTIN

Guess you didn't know 'em after all.

XAVIER

We were like brothers.

JUSTIN

Touché.

Xavier attempts to lunge at Justin. He cocks his gun. Xavier stops.

JUSTIN

Markus saw how unforgiving you were with your parents. He didn't dare risk the same alienation.

Xavier shakes his head in disbelief. His face fills with pain.

XAVIER

But why kill him?

JUSTIN

(voice begins to crack)

It was a mistake.

XAVIER

You bastard!

Xavier inches slowly toward Justin.

JUSTIN

I didn't mean to kill 'im.

(beat)

Markus was the only person who understood me.

(choking up)

I was aiming for Kenny that day... trying to silence him before my bi-sexuality became publicized. Markus just got in the way.

XAVIER

So it was you, the letter and all. And I was about to go down for it.

JUSTIN

(toughing back up)

I don't know about a letter, but it was so easy setting you up after you wouldn't let the rape stuff go. I put the medallion in your jacket when I bumped into you after popping Chris.

XAVIER

(growing upset)

That was you?

JUSTIN

That gang helped me out a lot by roughing up Nathan before I got to him.

KENNY

Oh my God...

Justin kicks him.

XAVIER

You put that stuff in my locker after I started asking too many questions. You killed them all.

JUSTIN

Not yet.

Justin shoves his gun in Kenny's buttock. He screams.

In the background, Sims and other cops pull up in vehicles. Jonathan and Xavier's frantic mother are with them.

Xavier inches slowly toward Justin.

KENNY

Oh please. I'll do anything, just--

XAVIER

--Man don't. What he did was wrong
but you're only going to make
things worse for yourself.

JUSTIN

My life can't get any worse.

(beat)

Stay back!

XAVIER

You don't want to do this. Let's just
talk about it.

KENNY

Oh God please!

JUSTIN

I mean it, man.

XAVIER

Let the cops deal with him.

KENNY

Help! Somebody please....

JUSTIN

Stay back.

The police and Jonathan slowly circle the three ready to
move in.

Xavier keeps inching forward.

XAVIER

Come on, kid--

JUSTIN

Stop right there. I mean it.

Xavier takes another step and Justin twists the gun inside
Kenny. He pulls the trigger.

XAVIER

Jesus Christ!

Justin points the gun at Xavier. The police move in. A radio is heard calling for an ambulance. Jonathan breaks away from the police trying to get closer to Xavier.

SIMS

Drop your weapon!

Justin stares from Xavier to Sims.

The police hold back Xavier's frantic friends in the crowd of onlookers.

SIMS

Drop it!

XAVIER

Listen to him.

JUSTIN

Shut up!

Justin fires at Xavier. Jonathan lunges toward Xavier trying to shield Xavier and crashes into him. Both of their bodies hit the ground.

Xavier's mother and Hope wail.

Police rush towards Justin who returns fire. He stumbles over Xavier and Jonathan's bodies and takes cover by a tree.

Justin peers from behind. Students flee the area, some looking back out of curiosity. Officers check Xavier and Jonathan. Professor McCann appears. Justin drops his head.

SIMS

This is your last chance. Surrender the gun and put your hands in the air.

Justin slumps down by the base of the tree.

SIMS

Now.

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out another clip and reloads. The police slowly approach the tree.

In the background Xavier picks himself off the ground while officers apply pressure to Jonathan's chest.

Seconds later a blast goes off behind the tree.

Justin's body falls to its side.

PROFESSOR MCCANN

Justin!

Police officers grab hold of Professor McCann as he crumbles to the pavement. Hope and Xavier's mother break free from the police and run towards Xavier.

HOPE

(clutching Xavier)

I thought I had lost you.

MOTHER

(kissing Xavier)

Don't ever risk your life like that again. You hear me?

XAVIER

I hear you.

Xavier's mother turns her attention to Jonathan and the paramedic.

MOTHER

Is he--

Before she can finish, Sims approaches.

SIMS

(to Xavier)

Son. What happened here tonight?

MOTHER

Does he have to do this right now?

SIMS

I've got two dead bodies on my hands--

HOPE

But he's been through--

XAVIER

--Hope, it's okay... Justin killed them all. He's responsible for the campus shootings.

Xavier is distracted when Jonathan regains consciousness, starts coughing and tries to sit up.

PARAMEDIC

Don't move.

JONATHAN

Where's Xavier?

Xavier moves from Hope's embrace and moves toward Jonathan.

JONATHAN

Thank goodness you're okay.

XAVIER

I've had better days, but I'm fine.

JONATHAN

Your arms bleeding. You should get checked out.

Xavier looks at his wound from earlier.

XAVIER

I'll live. But what on earth possessed you to leap in front of me?

JONATHAN

Don't you know by now that I'd do anything for you?

(beat)

You're my son...I love you.

Xavier is silent.

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF CAMPUS QUAD - NIGHT

Alex fights with police to get past.

ALEX

That's my son over there!

Xavier catches the scene out of the corner of his eye.

He remains silent looking at his weeping mother.

The police let Alex pass. He approaches and kneels down beside Xavier, clutching him.

XAVIER

Thanks...

Xavier looks down at Jonathan and squeezes his hand. A tear rolls down Jonathan's face.

Jonathan is lifted off the ground onto a stretcher and carried off by paramedics with Xavier's mother by his side.

Hope and Alex help Xavier to his feet and follow close behind. Kyle and Jules greet them as camera crews report live from the scene.

Xavier pauses and takes another look at the crime scene before climbing in the ambulance.

FADE OUT